

# The Growing Transit Communities Strategy

October 2013



**Growing Transit Communities**

Puget Sound Regional Council  
**PSRC**



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# **The Growing Transit Communities Strategy**

## A Transit Corridor Action Agenda for the Central Puget Sound Region

The Growing Transit Communities Partnership  
October 2013









# Growing Transit Communities Strategy

## Executive Summary

Our region has a shared vision for a sustainable future that will benefit our people, our prosperity, and our planet. VISION 2040, the central Puget Sound region's long-range plan for growth, transportation, and economic development, describes the commitments, actions, and stewardship needed over many decades by many stakeholders to achieve far-reaching goals. As the region grows to 5 million people—a more than 30 percent increase—by the year 2040, a key goal calls for growth within existing urban areas and especially in compact, walkable communities that are linked by transit.

The region's recent commitments to invest over \$25 billion in high-capacity transit (light rail, bus rapid transit, express bus, streetcar, and commuter rail) present an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to locate housing, jobs, and services close to these transit investments, and to do so in a way that benefits surrounding communities. A region-wide coalition of businesses, developers, local governments, transit agencies, and nonprofit organizations—the Growing Transit Communities Partnership—spent three years working together to create solutions that will encourage high-quality, equitable development around rapid transit.

## The Challenges

Growth, as envisioned in VISION 2040, should benefit all people by increasing economic development and access to jobs, expanding housing and transportation choices, promoting neighborhood character and vitality, and improving public health and environmental quality. But, this is easier said than done. In particular, this growth may magnify several challenges currently facing the region:



**Living in and working in walkable, transit-served communities.** Recent market studies show that there is significant unmet demand for housing and jobs located within walking distance of transit. Many people want to live and work in compact, complete, and connected communities, but investments in transit and in transit station areas have fallen behind. Attracting growth to transit communities will require policies to encourage more housing and jobs near transit along with investments in the infrastructure and services for a growing population.



**Housing choices for low and moderate income households near transit.** Forty-three percent of the region's households make less than 80 percent of the area median income. However, most new market-rate housing that is accessible to transit is unaffordable to these households. With new investment in transit communities, many lower-cost units are at risk of displacement. For the lowest income households, many of whom are transit dependent, the supply of subsidized housing is far short of the need. Building mixed-income communities that meet these needs will require improved strategies to minimize displacement, and preserve and produce diverse housing types affordable to a full range of incomes.



**Equitable access to opportunity for all the region's residents.** Analysis of indicators across the region reveals that too many people do not have access to education, employment, mobility, health, and neighborhood services and amenities. These community resources are the building blocks that create the opportunity to succeed and thrive in life. Transit communities, with their access to the region's jobs, institutions, and services are critical focal points for achieving greater equity for the region's diverse residents. As these communities grow through public and private investment, equitable development will require targeted community improvements and strategies to connect existing and future residents to greater regional resources.

## Why Now?

In the last decade, central Puget Sound voters have approved a series of high-capacity light rail and other transit investments—a commitment of approximately \$15 billion—that will serve the region’s most densely populated and diverse communities for decades to come. These investments present an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to support and improve existing communities and meet regional goals through strategies to make great places for people to live and work. In order to do this, the region must:

**Leverage transit investment to build sustainable communities.** Transit investments, such as light rail, streetcars, commuter rail, and bus rapid transit, create value by connecting communities to the larger region. Transit communities are the best opportunity for the region to become more sustainable, prosperous, and equitable.

**Create new resources and tools.** Current resources available to governmental and non-governmental agencies alike are not enough. New tools and funding sources will be necessary to meet infrastructure, economic development, housing, and other community needs.

**Work together across the region and across sectors.** It will take collaboration among a wide spectrum of public, private, and nonprofit agencies and organizations working together to promote thriving and equitable transit communities. There are roles for everyone in this process.



## The Strategy

How will this all be accomplished? The Growing Transit Communities Strategy calls for regional and local actions that respond to the challenges and opportunities in transit communities and represent major steps toward implementing the growth strategy in VISION 2040. The Strategy was developed by the Growing Transit Communities Partnership, an advisory body of various public, private, and nonprofit agencies and organizations working together to promote successful transit communities. The Growing Transit Communities Partnership, funded by a three-year grant from the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities and housed at the Puget Sound Regional Council, established three main goals for the Strategy:

- *Attract more of the region’s residential and employment growth near high-capacity transit*
- *Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high-capacity transit*
- *Increase access to opportunity for existing and future community members in transit communities*

### *Toolkit of Strategies and Actions*

Twenty-four strategies, guided by a People + Place Implementation Typology, constitute the “playbook” for the Growing Transit Communities Strategy. From overarching regional approaches to local and individual actions, together these provide a set of coordinated steps toward ensuring a prosperous, sustainable, and equitable future.

The Strategy presents 24 strategies recommended by the Growing Transit Communities Partnership and includes specific actions for PSRC, transit agencies, local governments, and other regional partners. The recommendations address the three main goals for transit communities. As a whole, the strategies are a call to action for partners across the region to redouble efforts to create great urban places and build equitable communities around transit. Fully recognizing the strong



policy foundation embodied in regional and local plans, as well as the innovative work in implementing those plans to date, the Partnership makes these recommendations as a challenge to do more than is being doing today.

The Toolkit of Strategies and Actions fall into four groupings:

The **Foundation Strategies** recommend a regional and local framework for ongoing work to support transit communities. Modeled on the relationships and values at the heart of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership, these strategies envision an ongoing regional effort involving a variety of partners and community members in decision making and implementation at all levels.

The **Strategies to Attract Housing and Employment Growth** recommend actions to make great urban places that are attractive to households and businesses, remove barriers to development, and support development in emerging markets.

The **Strategies to Provide Affordable Housing Choices** recommended actions to define and quantify housing needs, preserve existing affordable housing and supply new housing choices, and capitalize on the value created by the private market—enhanced by transit investments—in order to achieve the broadest range of affordability in transit communities.

The **Strategies to Increase Access to Opportunity** recommend actions to understand regional disparities in access to opportunity, identify existing and potential new resources and tools to meet community needs, and build support for equitable opportunities through education, coalitions, and leadership.



1. Establish a regional program to support thriving and equitable transit communities
2. Build partnerships and promote collaboration
3. Engage effectively with community stakeholders
4. Build capacity for community engagement
5. Evaluate and monitor impacts and outcomes



6. Conduct station area planning
7. Use land efficiently in transit communities
8. Locate, design, and provide access to transit stations to support TOD
9. Adopt innovative parking tools
10. Invest in infrastructure and public realm improvements



11. Assess current and future housing needs in transit communities
12. Minimize displacement through preservation and replacement
13. Increase housing support transit-dependent populations
14. Implement a TOD property acquisition fund
15. Expand value capture financing as a tool for infrastructure and affordable housing
16. Make surplus public lands available for affordable housing
17. Leverage market value through incentives
18. Implement regional fair housing assessment



19. Assess community needs
20. Invest in environmental and public health
21. Invest in economic vitality and opportunity
22. Invest in equitable mobility options
23. Invest in equitable access to high quality education
24. Invest in public safety in transit communities

Successful implementation will require shared commitment and collaboration among governments, major stakeholders, and community members. There are roles for many different regional and local partners, each with a distinct jurisdiction, authority, and mission. Consistent with those roles, all are asked to use the Toolkit of Strategies and Actions as a “playbook” for taking action to advance the regional vision of creating thriving and equitable transit communities in a manner that is a best fit to each community.

### *People + Place Implementation Typology*

No two transit communities are alike. Accordingly, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to the strategies that will help a transit community thrive and grow with equitable outcomes for current and future community members. The Strategy presents the People + Place Implementation Typology as a regional framework for local implementation. Working with stakeholders from each of three major light rail corridors, the Growing Transit Communities Partnership analyzed conditions in 74 study areas as a basis for a set of locally tailored recommendations. Based on indicators of the physical, economic, and social conditions in each transit community, the results of this typology analysis suggest eight Implementation Approaches. Key strategies and investments



address the needs and opportunities in different communities, while also advancing regional and corridor-wide goals. The Implementation Approaches and typology analysis are intended to complement and inform existing regional and, especially, local plans as they are implemented, evaluated, and refined in the coming years.

## **The Next Steps**

The Growing Transit Communities Strategy includes a three-part implementation plan to promote thriving and equitable transit communities in the central Puget Sound region. The **Regional Compact** affirms the support of a variety of partners from throughout the region for the Partnership’s work and a commitment to work toward regional goals by implementing the Strategy. The **Toolkit of Strategies and Actions** and the **People + Place Implementation Typology**, as described above and detailed in the body of this report, include 24 recommended strategies, eight implementation approaches, and corridor specific priorities that will guide an evolving approach to transit communities. The **Individual Work Plans** are local government, agency, or organization specific work plans, to be developed individually and in consultation with PSRC staff, which define short- and medium-term actions that can implement the Strategy. The nature and format of the Individual Work Plans will vary to reflect the diversity of public and private partners, legislative and decision-making processes, and actions adopted.



By working together, the central Puget Sound region can achieve its vision for a sustainable future that advances our people, our prosperity, and our planet. The Growing Transit Communities Strategy lays out essential tools and actions to get us there.



# Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b><u>i</u></b>
<b>INTRODUCTION: GROWING TRANSIT COMMUNITIES IN THE CENTRAL PUGET SOUND REGION</b>	<b><u>1</u></b>
EQUITABLE TRANSIT COMMUNITIES	4
FEDERAL FRAMEWORK	6
STATE AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS	6
TRANSIT INVESTMENTS	7
LOCAL PLANS	9
STUDY AREAS	9
REGIONAL GOALS FOR TRANSIT COMMUNITIES	10
USING THIS REPORT	11
<b>TOOLKIT OF STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS</b>	<b><u>13</u></b>
FOUNDATION STRATEGIES	17
STRATEGIES TO ATTRACT HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH	23
STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CHOICES	30
STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY	40
<b>PEOPLE + PLACE IMPLEMENTATION TYPOLOGY</b>	<b><u>49</u></b>
TRANSIT COMMUNITY PEOPLE PROFILE	52
TRANSIT COMMUNITY PLACE PROFILE	53
IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES	53
<b>CORRIDOR SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES</b>	<b><u>61</u></b>
SOUTH CORRIDOR	63
EAST CORRIDOR	66
NORTH CORRIDOR	69
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b><u>71</u></b>
<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>	<b><u>75</u></b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b><u>81</u></b>

## List of Figures

<b>1: THE GROWING TRANSIT COMMUNITIES STRATEGY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2: GROWING TRANSIT COMMUNITIES STUDY AREA MAP WITH REGIONAL TRANSIT INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3: THE PEOPLE + PLACE IMPLEMENTATION TYPOLOGY FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>4: PEOPLE + PLACE IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>5: SOUTH CORRIDOR IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES AND TRANSIT INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>6: EAST CORRIDOR IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES AND TRANSIT INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>7: NORTH CORRIDOR IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES AND TRANSIT INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>68</b>



# **Introduction: Growing Transit Communities in the Central Puget Sound Region**







# Growing Transit Communities in the Central Puget Sound Region

The central Puget Sound is expected to grow to 5 million people by the year 2040, a 35 percent increase over the next 30 years. To prepare for that growth, the region adopted VISION 2040 as a shared strategy for moving toward a sustainable future. One of VISION 2040's overarching goals calls for focusing growth within centers connected by high-capacity transit to create walkable, compact, and transit-oriented communities that maintain unique local character, while curbing sprawl on rural and resource lands. These communities are the basic framework for the region's high-capacity transit system, and the centerpiece of the region's growth strategy.

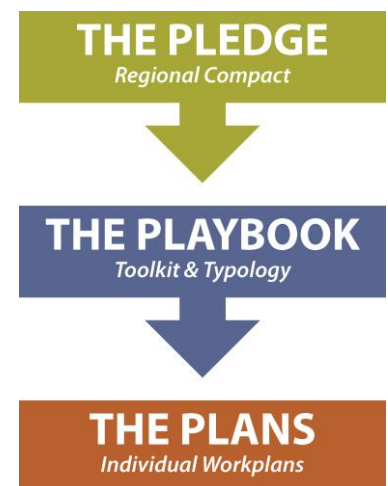
The Growing Transit Communities Strategy identifies the actions and tools that will be necessary to attract growth to the region's transit station areas, implement the region's plans, and build prosperous and sustainable communities that benefit all.

The Growing Transit Communities Partnership (GTC Partnership) was formed in 2011 as a regional coalition of governments, non-profit organizations, business groups, and community stakeholders for the purpose of promoting the successful development of thriving and equitable communities within walking distance of current and planned public transportation services in the central Puget Sound region. The GTC Partnership has built a strong and diverse coalition of regional interests, conducted research and analysis, identified recommended best practices, and furthered development of effective tools for community building. Through this work, the GTC Partnership developed a comprehensive, tiered approach designed for the wide range of stakeholders to effectively implement projects and programs appropriate to their specific roles. Collectively, these are called the Growing Transit Communities Strategy and include:

- Regional Compact: Shared vision, goals, and commitment by Partners to work toward implementation (See Appendix A)
- Toolkit of Strategies and Actions: 24 recommended strategies and associated implementation actions, People + Place Implementation Typology, and Transit Community Profiles
- Individual Work Plans: Individual work plans and next steps

The Strategy represents the GTC Partnership's recommendations for key actions and priorities that achieve three main goals for transit communities:

- Attract residential and employment growth near transit
- Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes
- Increase access to opportunity for existing and future transit community members



**Figure 1: The Growing Transit Communities Strategy**

## **Growing Transit Communities Partnership Members:**

A Regional Coalition for Housing  
City of Bellevue  
Bellwether Housing  
Capitol Hill Housing  
Forterra  
Community Development  
Collaborative/Equity Partnership  
Homesight  
Impact Capital  
Community Transit  
Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.  
City of Everett  
Futurewise  
Housing Authority of Snohomish County  
Housing Consortium of Everett and  
Snohomish County  
Housing Development Consortium Seattle  
– King County  
King County  
King County Housing Authority  
North Seattle Community College  
City of Mountlake Terrace  
Pierce County  
Public Health—Seattle & King County  
Puget Sound Regional Council  
Puget Sound Sage  
Quality Growth Alliance  
City of Redmond  
Refugee and Immigrant Services  
City of Seattle  
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Seattle Transit Blog  
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Sound Transit  
City of Tacoma  
Tacoma Housing Authority  
Tacoma-Pierce County Affordable  
Housing Consortium  
Tacoma-Pierce County Health  
Department  
University of Washington  
ULI—Seattle District Council  
Washington Low Income Housing  
Alliance  
Washington State Department of  
Commerce  
Washington State Housing Finance  
Commission

*(See Appendix B for information on the GTC Partnership structure and process)*

With an initial focus on 74 study areas located within the region's long-range light rail corridors (see Figure 2 on page 8, and Appendix C), the work of the GTC Partnership represents a critical action plan for implementing the region's growth strategy through community and economic development around these and other transit nodes.

Promoting transit communities is a key strategy to help achieve a more sustainable, prosperous, and equitable central Puget Sound region. While the region is already a recognized national leader in planning for sustainable development, the investment of more than \$25 billion in light rail and other forms of high-capacity transit requires bold, coordinated action to ensure the greatest value from these investments is realized. Success will mean this is a region that can compete globally for jobs and investment, and one that is well positioned to attract scarce state and federal funds for transportation and community development. Success also means providing the tools, resources, and public support necessary to achieve a regional vision where compact growth, improved transit connections, and a range of community investments provide benefits fairly to all.

## **Equitable Transit Communities**

Transit stations are critical access points to the region's transportation system, connecting residents and workers to jobs, daily activities, and services and offering access to civic and public spaces. Transit investments, in turn, can have a powerful influence on communities by increasing attractiveness to households and businesses and boosting market demand that fuels change and growth.

"Transit Communities" are generally the areas within a half mile radius of, or approximate ten-minute walking distance from, high-capacity transit stations such as light rail, bus rapid transit, streetcar, and other major transit hubs. Adopted regional policy recognizes that accommodating growth in transit communities can lead to a range of substantial social and environmental benefits, including the potential to:

- Promote health by encouraging walking and biking, cutting air pollution, and reducing motor vehicle accidents
- Lower household expenses for transportation
- Reduce municipal infrastructure costs
- Help meet the growing demand for "walkable communities"

- Curb land consumption and thereby help conserve farms and natural ecosystems, and protect water quality
- Cut energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions associated with both transportation and the built environment

The benefits to residents of transit communities are many, including expanded housing choices, better access to new and existing jobs, enhanced community amenities, and access to a diverse range of opportunities in the region. However, there are also potential negative impacts, including the threat of residential or commercial displacement as communities redevelop and market demand increases, which may price existing residents or business out of locations. In order to address the opportunities and challenges that major investments create, the GTC Partnership has embraced a strong value of social equity in working toward a fair distribution of the benefits of expanding the public transportation system and building transit communities, regardless of income, race, national origin, age, or disability.

To bring these values to the forefront of the GTC Partnership, a coalition of regional and community based interests, including community development corporations, public health officials, affordable housing providers, and environmental and social justice activists, came together as the Equity Network to ensure equitable engagement and outcomes from the work of the GTC Partnership. Working with the Equity Network, the GTC Partnership has defined a vision for “equitable transit communities”:

*Equitable transit communities are mixed-use, transit-served neighborhoods that provide housing and transportation choices and greater social and economic opportunity for current and future residents. Although generally defined by a half-mile walking distance around high-capacity transit stations, they exist within the context of larger neighborhoods with existing residents and businesses.*

*These communities promote local community and economic development by providing housing types at a range of densities and affordability levels, commercial and retail spaces, community services, and other amenities that are integrated into safe, walkable neighborhoods.*

*Successful equitable transit communities are created through inclusive planning and decision-making processes, resulting in development outcomes that accommodate future residential and employment growth, increase opportunity and mobility for existing communities, and enhance public health for socially and economically diverse populations.*

## **The Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities Livability Principles:**

**1. Provide more transportation choices.** Develop safe, reliable and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation’s dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote public health.

**2. Promote equitable, affordable housing.** Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.

**3. Enhance economic competitiveness.** Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers as well as expanded business access to markets.

**4. Support existing communities.** Target federal funding toward existing communities—through such strategies as transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling—to increase community revitalization, improve the efficiency of public works investments, and safeguard rural landscapes.

**5. Coordinate policies and leverage investment.** Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.

**6. Value communities and neighborhoods.** Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

## Federal Framework

In June 2009, the U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Secretary of Transportation, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator announced the formation of the interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Guided by six Livability Principles (see sidebar on page 5), HUD, DOT, and EPA are coordinating investments and aligning policies to support communities that want to provide more housing choices, make transportation systems more efficient and reliable, reinforce existing investments, protect the environment, and support vibrant and healthy neighborhoods that attract businesses.

In 2010, a consortium of governmental, business, affordable housing, and other non-profit stakeholders from

### The Central Puget Sound Region

The central Puget Sound region is one of the major metropolitan regions in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. It includes King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties and their 82 cities and towns, and tribes covering an area of nearly 6,300 square miles (16,300 square kilometers). The region's geography is diverse, and includes urban, rural, and resource lands. Numerous hills, mountains, and lakes provide significant variety to the topography of the region, which ranges in elevation from sea level at Puget Sound to over 14,000 feet (more than 4,000 meters) at Mount Rainier.

### Washington State Growth Management Act

In 1990, the Washington State Legislature adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA) to address uncoordinated and unplanned growth that posed a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and quality of life in Washington. This landmark act recognized the importance of proactively planning for population and employment growth through identifying and protecting critical areas and natural resource lands, designating urban growth areas, and preparing comprehensive plans through a decentralized framework that reflected Washington's regional diversity and strong tradition of local government control. The central Puget Sound region has a long history of citizen engagement in planning decisions, both at the regional and local levels, which has influenced adopted plans and policies to reflect regional values on way of life, the environment, and economic development.

the central Puget Sound region applied for and received a three-year \$5 million regional planning implementation grant from the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities (acting through HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities). The work of the GTC Partnership is funded by that grant.

## State and Regional Frameworks

As the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and state-designated Regional Planning Organization (RPO) for the central Puget Sound region, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) develops policies and coordinates decisions about regional growth, transportation, and economic development planning within King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap counties. PSRC's members include over 80 county, city, port, transit, tribal, and state agencies. PSRC is also the lead regional economic development planning resource and home to the Prosperity Partnership, a coalition of more than 300 government, business, labor and community organizations dedicated to improving long-term economic prosperity for the region.

VISION 2040, adopted by PSRC's General Assembly in 2008, is the region's long-range growth management, environmental, economic, and transportation strategy. It articulates a shared strategy for moving the central Puget Sound region toward a sustainable future through the combined efforts of individuals, governments, organizations, and the private sector. VISION 2040 addresses the key question:

*"How can the region accommodate the anticipated growth that will bring it to 5 million people and 3 million jobs by 2040 while enhancing the environment and our overall quality of life?"*

To meet this challenge, VISION 2040 contains regional goals that are intended to promote the ideals of “people, prosperity, and planet” through a Regional Growth Strategy and Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs). The goals, policies, and actions in VISION 2040 help achieve a vision for the region as a compact urban area surrounded by rural and resource lands, and anchored by a set of defined centers that are connected by a high-capacity transit system.

Also guided by VISION 2040’s multicounty planning policies, the *Regional Economic Strategy* contains detailed action initiatives focused on strengthening the region’s leading industry clusters and rebuilding the foundations of the economy. An efficient, well-functioning transportation system that supports key employment sectors, provides more convenient and varied transportation options, and improves travel reliability for people and goods to maintain and enhance quality of life in the region is critical for a strong economy.

VISION 2040 is supported by the region’s long-range transportation plan, Transportation 2040, adopted in 2010. Transportation 2040 integrates transportation and land use planning to achieve regional goals and to support the land use objectives embodied in the growth strategy and centers concept. In order to advance transit communities, local jurisdictions are encouraged to adopt station area plans. Transportation 2040 supports the Regional Economic Strategy through improvements to the transportation system that address the mobility of workers and goods, and access to services throughout the region, including by transit. Transportation 2040 specifically calls for \$50 billion in transit investments over the next several decades. Finally, the plan supports the people of the region and social equity goals through measurable benefits to low-income and minority populations.

The Growing Transit Communities Strategy, while not a set of policies or requirements itself, represents a recommended toolkit of actions for consideration by various partners. It is intended to further all three adopted regional policy documents with effective implementation approaches that support the region’s growth strategy and reflect the diversity of communities in the region, enriched by the shared goals and distinct perspectives of a wide range of regional and community stakeholders.

## Transit Investments

The central Puget Sound region has made an extraordinary public commitment to develop a regional high-capacity transit system. Through public votes in 1996, 2006, and 2008, the region’s voters authorized the development of Sound Transit’s existing and planned light rail lines and Sounder commuter rail, King County’s RapidRide and Snohomish County’s Swift bus rapid transit. Transit communities served by these and other public transit options will be magnets to attract and accommodate sustainable population and employment growth. Combined, these public transit investments total over \$15 billion dollars, and span more than two decades, with longer-range plans identified through 2040. Large-scale transformational projects such as these have not taken place in the region since the development of the interstate highway system that began in the 1960s.

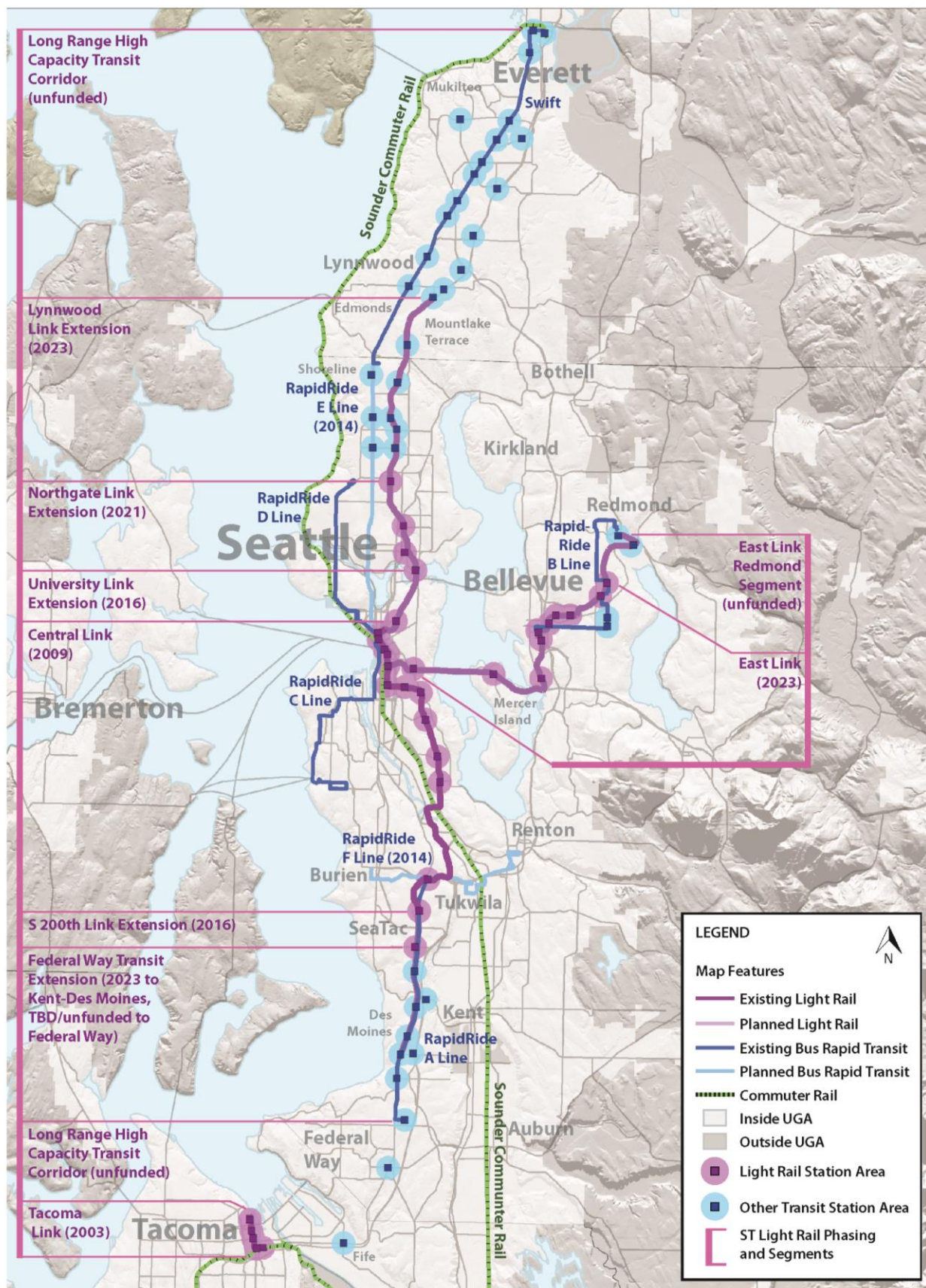
### Transit Services Types

Transportation 2040 describes three main types of transit service: Core, Community Connector, and Specialized.

Specific to Transit Communities, Core service will be the primary type that serves them. Light rail, bus rapid transit, and high frequency local buses are considered core transit services.

Core services are generally routed to or through areas with higher density population and/or employment. By providing frequent and efficient service to areas with higher densities and mixed uses, core services are expected to draw high ridership. Typically running all day, core service is intended to operate at high frequency and at the higher speeds to the extent practical.





**Figure 2: Growing Transit Communities Study Area Map with Regional Transit Investments**



Figure 2 shows the high-capacity transit investments, both existing and planned, within the three corridors on which the Partnership's initial work focused. The map shows Sound Transit's current and planned light rail lines, existing commuter rail, and current and future bus rapid transit. The light rail system includes 13 existing Central Link light rail stations extending from Downtown Seattle to Sea-Tac Airport and five Tacoma Link stations. The 2008 Sound Transit 2 (ST2) ballot initiative funded another 36 miles of light rail investment along three corridors: north to Lynnwood, east to Redmond (Overlake), and south to Federal Way. The ST2-funded stations will start service by 2023.

Although the funded transit networks in ST2 terminate at Lynnwood, Redmond (Overlake) and Federal Way, Transportation 2040 and Sound Transit's long-range plan envision three high-capacity transit corridors that extend beyond these funded investments to reach Everett to the north, downtown Redmond to the east, and Tacoma to the south. It is expected that a future Sound Transit ballot initiative will provide funding for completing the system. Although some preliminary planning for another initiative is underway at Sound Transit, there is currently no date for a vote or a time frame for the actual system development, nor what the plan will contain.

The development of the known ST2 and other high-capacity transit investments as well as ongoing long-range planning for future transit provide key opportunities to implement the recommendations of the Growing Transit Communities Strategy. The applicability of the recommendations to different high-capacity modes—commuter rail, light rail, ferry, bus rapid transit, and other high-capacity bus transit—will vary throughout the region.

## Local Plans

Local governments in the central Puget Sound region are required under the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) to adopt comprehensive plans that articulate a vision for the future growth and development of the community and address a range of topics, including land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities, and critical areas. Under state law, PSRC certifies the transportation-related elements of these local plans and reviews and comments on other elements as part of the adoption and update processes. PSRC also is responsible, as required by state law, to assess regional high-capacity transit investments for conformity to adopted regional plans.

The Growing Transit Communities Strategy is intended to implement VISION 2040 and support local plans through recommended strategies that promote shared goals for urban and economic development, mobility, housing, and community development and quality of life. Some of the recommendations offer refinements of existing regional or local policies and programs, and many are new. Many local jurisdictions have already undertaken significant planning in transit communities. The Strategy seeks to enhance, not supplant, these existing local efforts. The next required updates to comprehensive plans, due in 2015 and 2016, offer an opportunity for local jurisdictions to consider amendments to their policies and regulations to include elements of the Growing Transit Communities Strategy.

## Study Areas

Growing Transit Communities focused on 74 study areas that were created by drawing a half-mile radius around current and future Sound Transit Link light rail stations, as well as other key transit nodes, and residential or employment centers within the three long-range, high-capacity transit corridors identified in Transportation 2040 (see Figure 2 on page 8). While the grant-funded effort collected and analyzed data for

these identified communities as a basis for the Growing Transit Communities Strategy, the recommendations are intended to provide direction on strategies applicable to the region's many other significant transit corridors and nodes, served by a variety of transit service, including but not limited to bus rapid transit, streetcar, commuter rail, intercity express bus, and ferry station areas. See the detailed corridor maps in the Corridor-Specific Implementation Priorities chapter and Appendices C, D and E for greater detail on the 74 study areas.

## Regional Goals for Transit Communities

The combined efforts of individuals, governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector are needed to realize the region's vision. This includes all of the stakeholders who have been engaged in the Growing Transit Communities work, including local jurisdictions, transit agencies, public health and housing agencies, private and nonprofit housing developers, environmental and transportation advocates, and institutional and philanthropic interests.

The GTC Partnership articulated three goals to direct progress toward creating thriving and equitable transit communities across the region:

### **1. Attract more of the region's residential and employment growth to high capacity transit communities.**

*VISION 2040 calls for a compact pattern of growth within the Urban Growth Area, particularly in regional and subregional centers served by high-capacity transit. The Growing Transit Communities work program has demonstrated that the region's light rail corridors alone have the potential to support this vision by attracting at least 25% of the housing growth and 35% of the employment growth expected in the region through the year 2040. Attracting additional TOD market demand to other regional corridors that are served by other types of high capacity transit is also essential. To advance the Regional Growth Strategy adopted in VISION 2040, promote economic development, and realize the multiple public benefits of compact growth around rapid transit investments, the signatories to this Compact will strive to:*

- Use a full range of tools, investments, and economic development strategies, to attract the potential demand for residential and commercial transit oriented development within transit communities consistent with and in furtherance of regional policies and plans, and*
- Plan for and promote residential and employment densities within transit communities that support ridership potential and contribute to accommodating growth needs within each high-capacity transit corridor.*

*Additional transit communities along the region's other high-capacity transit mode corridors will also attract significant portions of future residential and employment growth.*

### **2. Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high-capacity transit.**

*Adopted regional policy recognizes housing as a basic human need and calls for local policies and tools that provide for an adequate supply of housing affordable at all income levels, to meet the diverse needs of both current and future residents. Region-wide, affordable housing need is defined by current household incomes, where 18% of households earn between 50% and 80% of AMI, 12% earn between 30% and 50% of AMI, and 13% earn less than 30% of AMI. In transit communities, projected need for affordable housing is higher, especially for households in the lowest income range due to their greater*

*reliance on transit. Depending on local market conditions, efforts to meet that need will focus on new housing, housing preservation, or combined strategies. In order to meet a substantial portion of this need within walking distance of rapid transit services, the signatories to this Compact will strive to:*

- *Use a full range of housing preservation tools to maintain the existing level of affordable housing within each transit community, and*
- *Use a full range of housing production tools and incentives to provide sufficient affordable housing choices for all economic and demographic groups within transit corridors, including new housing in the region's transit communities collectively that is proportional to region-wide need or greater to serve transit-dependent households.*

*These goals apply to the region's transit corridors collectively, and do not suggest a specific desired outcome for any individual transit community. Further, fully attaining these goals will require new tools, resources, and subsidies beyond those that exist today.*

### **3. Increase access to opportunity for existing and future residents of transit communities.**

*Adopted regional policy recognizes the need to address the diverse housing, transportation and economic needs of current and future residents so that all people may prosper as the region grows. This requires special attention to communities that lack access to transportation choices, quality schools, and other social and physical neighborhood components that allow community members to thrive and succeed.*

*In order to more equitably meet the needs of all residents of the region, the signatories to this Compact will strive to:*

- *Improve access to opportunity in the transit corridors through targeted investments that meet the needs of residents and businesses in communities with limited access to opportunity, targeted affordable housing investments in communities with good access to opportunity, and transit connections linking areas with good access to opportunity and areas with limited access to opportunity.*
- *Use a full range of community engagement strategies to increase the involvement of diverse and historically under-represented groups in transit community development, empower communities to influence decisions at all levels of government, and ensure opportunities for participation throughout decision-making processes.*

## **Using this Report**

The remainder of this document includes the following chapters and appendices. The **Toolkit of Strategies and Actions** section constitutes the majority of the document and covers growth, housing, access to opportunity, and foundational strategies. In all, 24 separate strategies are described. Each strategy recommends one or more actions that different regional partners may take in order to advance the strategy. Those partners include the PSRC, transit agencies, local government, and non-governmental organizations. The Strategies and Actions represent a toolbox from which the region may draw as the transit systems and surrounding communities grow over time. This section provides source material documenting regional consensus on best practices, expected roles and relationships among regional partners, and new tools and

programs, thereby creating a starting point for different agencies and organizations to develop work programs to advance thriving and equitable transit communities.

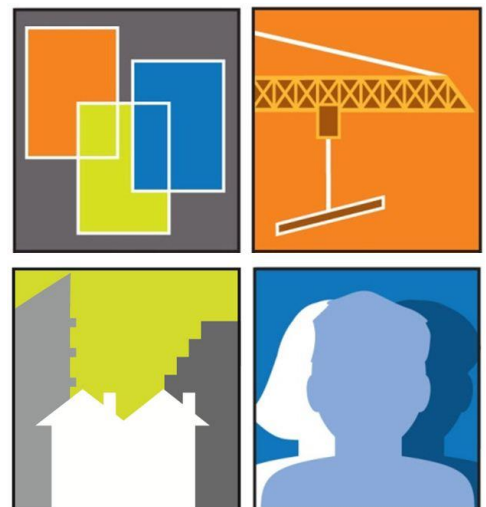
The section on **People + Place Implementation Typology** describes a methodology to make sense of the range of potential Strategies from a place-specific perspective. The Typology uses data on existing conditions to sort the 74 transit communities into eight Implementation Approaches. Each Implementation Approach highlights key growth, housing and access to opportunity strategies that may be appropriate for transit communities with certain shared characteristics.

A section on **Corridor-Specific Implementation Priorities** follows, complementing the typology by identifying issues and initiatives that are most relevant at the corridor level of analysis and plan implementation. Users of this document, who are interested in focusing on the most appropriate tools for particular transit communities, will use these sections as guides for how to best tailor implementation to each location within the region.

**Next Steps** previews the process whereby GTC Partnership staff will work with regional and local partners to endorse the Growing Transit Communities Regional Compact and, starting in fall 2013, to identify work program items for inclusion in Individual Work Plans. The process of developing the work plans will draw directly from the Toolkit of Strategies and Actions, People + Place Implementation Typology, and Corridor-Specific Implementation Priorities.

Finally, a **Glossary of Terms** and several **Appendices**—including the text of the GTC Regional Compact, additional background information on the GTC Partnership, detailed information on the 74 study areas, complete methods and results of the typology exercise, and details Transit Community Profiles for the 74 study areas—provide additional reference material.

# Toolkit of Strategies and Actions







# Toolkit of Strategies and Actions

The following 24 strategies and associated actions are the Growing Transit Communities primary recommendations. They are the result of an 18-month process informed by research, analysis, and deliberation. The strategies address the three main regional goals for transit communities: to attract more of the region's residential and employment growth near high capacity transit, to provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes, and to increase access to opportunity for existing and future transit community members.



1. Establish a regional program to support thriving and equitable transit communities
2. Build partnerships and promote collaboration
3. Engage effectively with community stakeholders
4. Build capacity for community engagement
5. Evaluate and monitor impacts and outcomes



6. Conduct station area planning
7. Use land efficiently in transit communities
8. Locate, design and provide access to transit stations to support TOD
9. Adopt innovative parking tools
10. Invest in infrastructure and public realm improvements



11. Assess current and future housing needs in transit communities
12. Minimize displacement through preservation and replacement
13. Direct housing resources to support transit-dependent populations
14. Implement a TOD property acquisition fund
15. Expand value capture financing as a tool for infrastructure and affordable housing
16. Make surplus public lands available for affordable housing
17. Leverage market value through incentives
18. Implement regional fair housing assessment



19. Assess community needs
20. Invest in environmental and public health
21. Invest in economic vitality and opportunity
22. Invest in equitable mobility options
23. Invest in equitable access to high quality education
24. Invest in public safety in transit communities

The 24 strategies fall into four groupings:

- The **Foundation Strategies** recommend a regional and local framework for ongoing work to support transit communities. Modeled on the relationships and values at the heart of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership, these strategies envision an ongoing regional effort involving a variety of partners and community members in decision making and implementation at all levels.
- The **Strategies to Attract Housing and Employment Growth** recommend actions to make great urban places that are attractive to households and businesses, remove barriers to development, and support development in emerging markets.
- The **Strategies to Provide Affordable Housing Choices** recommended actions to define and quantify housing needs, preserve existing and supply new housing choices, and capitalize on the value created by the private market, enhanced by transit investments, in order to achieve the broadest range of affordability in transit communities.
- The **Strategies to Increase Access to Opportunity** recommend actions to understand regional disparities in access to opportunity, identify existing and potential new resources and tools to meet community needs, and build support for equitable opportunities through education, coalitions, and leadership.

As a whole, these strategies are a call to action for partners across the region to intensify efforts to create great urban places and build equitable communities around transit. Fully recognizing the strong policy foundation embodied in existing regional and local plans, as well as the innovative work in implementing those plans by many local jurisdictions to date, the Partnership makes these recommendations as a challenge to do more than is being doing today.

The Recommended Strategies and Actions are also a call for more effective implementation through collaboration among governments, major stakeholders, and community members. There are roles for many different regional and local partners, each with a distinct jurisdiction, authority, and mission. Consistent with those roles, all are asked use the Strategies as a “playbook” for taking action to advance the regional vision of thriving and equitable transit communities in a manner that is a best fit to each community.

The Partnership’s goals are ambitious and set the bar high for all. There is need for new tools and resources to achieve these goals. The powerful regional coalition assembled for this effort should continue to work together to support legislative changes and new resources that expand the toolbox. Several strategies point to the need to amend state law to provide more options for public agencies. Others point to the need for funding, including for sustaining and expanding transit systems, for infrastructure, expanded and more effective subsidies for affordable housing, and resources to provide for community needs equitably throughout the region. Continued leadership and collaboration on these priorities is vital for this effort to succeed.

# Foundation Strategies



The first five Foundation Strategies recommend a regional and local framework for ongoing work to support transit communities. Modeled on the relationships and values at the heart of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership, these strategies envision an ongoing regional effort involving a variety of partners and community members in decision-making and implementation at all levels. The strategies detail the collaboration, engagement, evaluation, and monitoring necessary to support an effective regional effort. As an overarching set of recommendations, they apply across the board to all 24 strategies. For example, engaging community stakeholders (Strategy 3) is a priority wherever needs assessments, station area planning, and implementing regulations and programs are under consideration. These Foundation Strategies are therefore critical to implementing specific recommendations, as well as the broader goal of achieving thriving and equitable transit communities.

## Recommended Strategies

1. Establish a regional program to support thriving and equitable transit communities
2. Build partnerships and promote collaboration
3. Engage effectively with community stakeholders
4. Build capacity for community engagement
5. Evaluate and monitor impacts and outcomes



## Strategy 1: Establish a Regional Program to Support Thriving and Equitable Transit Communities

In order to carry out the goals and strategies envisioned by the GTC Partnership, a continued regional effort, based within PSRC and guided by an ongoing coalition of regional stakeholders, is needed to promote thriving and equitable transit communities in the region. This effort should be expanded beyond the light rail corridors that are the focus of the GTC Partnership's grant-funded work to include other high-capacity transit nodes in the region and to involve new partners across multiple sectors.

### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 1.1. Provide staff support for the work of a GTC Partnership beyond the term of the current Sustainable Communities grant.
- 1.2. Support the continued work of an advisory committee of a variety of public and private stakeholders, including a full range of current GTC Partners who have committed to working together to advance this GTC Strategy. Roles for the advisory committee should include providing ongoing guidance to PSRC and other agencies and organizations on implementation, coalition building within the region, and support for state and federal legislation and funding needed to create and sustain thriving and equitable transit communities in the region.
- 1.3. Create a regional transit oriented development implementation program at PSRC with sufficient staffing and work plan to further the GTC Strategy and including actions in the areas of attracting growth, providing affordable housing, and improving equitable engagement and access to opportunity within transit communities.
- 1.4. Build on the foundation established through the GTC Affordable Housing Action Strategy and the PSRC's Housing Innovations Program with ongoing staffing of a regional housing affordability initiative focused on meeting the needs for housing in regional centers and other transit communities.
- 1.5. Expand the geographic scope of the GTC Partnership through implementation of the GTC Strategy beyond the three long-range light rail corridors to include current and planned transit communities around stations for commuter rail, bus rapid transit, streetcar, and other high-capacity transit investments in the region, as appropriate.
- 1.6. Collaborate with local governments and other stakeholders to explore options for regional designation of selected transit communities based on their potential to provide regional benefits and alignment with the GTC Strategy.
- 1.7. Establish a regional peer networking exchange for staff at cities, other public agencies, and relevant non-governmental organizations working on transit community development.

### Transit Agencies

- 1.8. Participate as a member of a regional TOD implementation program advisory committee.
- 1.9. Continue to strengthen agency partnerships, policies, programs, and plans to support thriving and equitable transit communities.

### Local Governments

- 1.10. Participate as a member of a regional TOD implementation program advisory committee.
- 1.11. Continue to strengthen local partnerships, policies, programs, and plans to support thriving and equitable transit communities.

### Other Partners

- 1.12. Support and participate in an ongoing regional coalition for thriving and equitable transit communities, where applicable as a member of a regional TOD implementation program advisory committee.
- 1.13. Continue to strengthen partnerships, policies, programs and plans to support thriving and equitable transit communities.

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Regional programs and initiatives would apply to all current and potential transit communities around multiple modes of high-capacity transit in the region.



## Strategy 2: Build Partnerships and Promote Collaboration

Partnerships throughout the region and across sectors will be critical to implementing the GTC Strategy. The GTC Partnership made progress toward bringing a variety of players in the region together around common objectives. As the regional effort continues, this partnership should be strengthened through stronger collaboration between existing members and the inclusion of new partners, such as more members of the private sector, economic development and education interests, and historically underrepresented populations.

### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 2.1 Implement a regional TOD program as a collaboration involving growth management, transportation, economic development, and technical staff and resources at the PSRC. Continue to build on an integrated planning approach to transit community development as a model for other agencies in the region.
- 2.2 Provide a forum for coalitions of a variety of stakeholders from throughout the region to work collaboratively toward implementation of the GTC Strategy.
- 2.3 Conduct outreach to new partners and sectors in order to:
  - Raise awareness of regional and local benefits of TOD and equitable community development
  - Encourage contributions of new partners to successful implementation of the GTC Strategy
  - Reach out to local governments in additional high-capacity transit corridors
  - Focus on private sectors that have been underrepresented in the work of Growing Transit Communities, such as businesses and major employers, developers and land owners
- 2.4 Adapt for regional application the lessons learned on the topic of partnerships from the Growing Transit Communities demonstration projects in Northgate, Tacoma, and the East Corridor.

### Transit Agencies

- 2.5 Continue and seek ways to improve collaboration with local governments, PSRC, and other transit agencies around transit system planning, development, and operations.
- 2.6 Explore options for public-private partnerships that result in development on available agency-owned properties, including options that encourage housing density and affordability in transit communities.

### Local Governments

- 2.7 Build on the work of the GTC corridor Task Forces with continued collaboration among local governments and stakeholders in each transit corridor around promotion of equitable TOD.
- 2.8 Implement station area TOD strategies through interdepartmental collaboration. Weave recommended equitable TOD strategies into elements of comprehensive planning, capital facilities, and code development. Identify and eliminate barriers to implementation in existing processes and organizational structures.
- 2.9 Identify opportunities for public-private partnerships that further equitable TOD, using tools such as development agreements, transportation benefit districts, and community renewal.

### Equity Network

- 2.10 Continue and expand the work of the Equity Network to include new partners in a broad coalition from across the region around a shared vision of equitable transit community development.

### Foundations

- 2.11 Continue and expand the work of foundations to include new partners and strengthen coordinated investments in programs and strategies to support thriving and equitable transit communities.

### Other Partners

- 2.12 Build upon the success of coalitions, such as the Equity Network and the Funders Collaborative, to form new or expand coalitions among key regional stakeholder groups. Potential coalitions include business community initiatives to foster place-based economic development in the transit corridors, sustainable builder and development groups, and the education community convening in support of equitable access to quality education across the region.

## Recommended Actions

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- The need to build partnerships and promote collaboration applies to all transit communities region-wide.



## Strategy 3: Engage Effectively with Community Stakeholders

Community engagement is an integral part of the way public agencies make and implement policies in our region. The GTC Partnership and the Equity Network have taken important steps to explore and apply innovative community engagement strategies to improve and expand those practices to more effectively include historically underrepresented populations, including low-income households and persons of color, early in the planning process and before decisions are made. This work has identified a toolbox of equitable community engagement strategies that include:

- Multilingual outreach and engagement
- Outreach through existing community groups and organizations
- Direct person-to-person outreach where people live and do business
- Support for meeting participation, such as childcare, refreshments, and convenient scheduling and locations
- Clarity of communications on scope and focus of engagement, expectations and process
- Visualization tools and other multi-media approaches
- Innovative models for effective engagement and long-term relationship building, such as trusted advocate and public outreach liaisons
- Building capacity and cultural competency within organizations and public agencies, such as through training and recruitment, in order to engage effectively with diverse constituencies

Successful implementation of the GTC Strategy will depend on effective, responsive and ongoing engagement with as broad a range of community members and stakeholders as possible with opportunities to influence policies and actions early and often throughout the public decision making process.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 3.1 Present the work of the GTC Partnership to both regional stakeholders and the public in a manner that is clear, concise, and free of excessive jargon. Emphasize major goals, actions, and benefits to the region and local communities.
- 3.2 Collaborate with a broad range of regional and community stakeholders to develop and disseminate guidance and provide technical support on best practices in equitable community engagement, incorporating lessons learned from the GTC Equity Grants Program.
- 3.3 Continue to develop and apply equitable community engagement strategies as part of regional policy development and implementation activities, including future updates to the adopted PSRC Public Participation Plan.
- 3.4 Explore and improve methods for direct citizen engagement in regional policy and planning processes, particularly for those who typically do not participate due to time, cultural or other barriers, through methods such as community advisory boards, working groups, focus groups, and roundtables.

#### Transit Agencies

- 3.5 Continue to develop and apply equitable community engagement strategies early and before decisions are made.

#### Local Governments

- 3.6 Continue to develop and apply equitable community engagement strategies as part of local comprehensive and station area planning and other decision-making affecting transit communities.

#### Equity Network

- 3.7 Engage with PSRC, local jurisdictions, and other agencies through active dialogue and implementation of strategies for equitable community engagement. The regional advisory committee could facilitate such engagement.

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- The need for effective and complete community and stakeholder engagement applies across the region, especially in transit communities with concentrations of low-income households, persons of color, or other historically underrepresented groups.





## Strategy 4: Build Capacity for Community Engagement

Capacity building provides community members with the knowledge, tools, and relationships to be able to have a say in decisions about their communities. The GTC Partnership's Equity Network Grant Program represents an innovative model to build the capacity of community based organizations to participate in planning processes and decision-making on behalf of their communities. Understanding and expanding upon the lessons learned from this program will facilitate the implementation of and build community support for the GTC Strategy.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 4.1 Collaborate with foundations and governmental agencies to identify and secure potential sources of funds for ongoing capacity building grants to community groups.
- 4.2 Continue to provide technical assistance, data, and information on current policy as a resource for community groups to effectively engage in regional and local policy decision-making. Incorporate lessons learned and tools developed by the GTC Equity Grants projects.
- 4.3 Provide a forum for ongoing regional coalitions, such as the Equity Network, to build capacity around regional equity issues, with a focus on non-governmental organizations and public-private partnerships.

#### Local Governments

- 4.4 Support community-based organizations through actions such as: convening community organizations, providing information about plans and projects in station areas, and offering staff support, meeting facilities, or funding for community organizations.

#### Foundations

- 4.5 Provide grants to community groups and other non-profits to build capacity within transit communities through community organizing, training, data, and networking opportunities.
- 4.6 Collaborate with PSRC and others to develop support systems, such as a regional information commons, for use by community groups as they engage in public policy processes.

#### Equity Network

- 4.7 Evaluate the long-term success of the Equity Grant Program in increasing capacity of community based organizations to be involved in planning processes and decision making.

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- The need for effective and comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement applies across the region, especially in transit communities with concentrations of low-income households, persons of color, or other historically underrepresented groups.



## Strategy 5: Evaluate and Monitor Impacts and Outcomes

The success of the GTC Strategy in supporting thriving and equitable transit communities will be realized over the long-term, underscoring the need to evaluate tools as they are implemented and monitor outcomes as they are realized in order to modify the strategies to strengthen success over time. Evaluation and monitoring efforts should focus on the three goal areas of the GTC Strategy: attract housing and employment growth, provide affordable housing choices, and increase equitable access to opportunity. As a complement to the monitoring efforts, public agencies should evaluate the equity impacts of policies and investments before they are implemented in transit communities.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 5.1 Develop a long-term work program to measure and evaluate the successes, impacts, and outcomes of the GTC Strategy in transit communities throughout the region. Leverage and build upon existing monitoring efforts, such as VISION 2040 monitoring and updated Regional Centers report.
- 5.2 Define a transit communities geography, and develop and monitor indicators of progress toward achieving transit community goals, such as housing and employment growth, housing affordability trends, and Opportunity Mapping measures.
- 5.3 Establish a schedule for regular reporting and engagement of regional partners in reviewing and responding to findings through refinements to the GTC Strategy.
- 5.4 Update the People + Place Implementation Typology to align with periodic required updates to local comprehensive plans.
- 5.5 Work with the Equity Network and other community stakeholders to develop a social equity evaluation tool to be available for use by public agencies throughout the region to measure the expected social equity impacts of proposed policies, programs, and investments. Use existing tools, such the Racial Equity Toolkit developed and used by the City of Seattle or the Equity Impact Review tools used by King County, as possible models for a regional tool.
- 5.6 Evaluate social equity impacts when considering new or updated regional policies and programs.

#### Transit Agencies

- 5.7 Monitor outcomes of transit investments and TOD-related programs, including transit system use and performance, and contribute relevant data to regional transit community monitoring.
- 5.8 Evaluate social equity impacts when considering new or updated policies and programs, consistent with applicable state and federal laws.

#### Local Governments

- 5.9 Monitor indicators of progress toward local goals for transit communities and contribute relevant data to regional TOD monitoring.
- 5.10 Evaluate social equity impacts when considering new or updated policies and programs.

#### Equity Network

- 5.11 Provide assistance in the development of evaluation and monitoring tools, including the social equity evaluation tool.

### Priority Transit Communities for this Action Area

- The need for evaluation and monitoring of impacts and outcomes applies across the region.

# Strategies to Attract Housing and Employment Growth



**Goal:**      **Attract more of the region's residential and employment growth to high capacity transit communities.**

VISION 2040 calls for a compact pattern of growth within the Urban Growth Area, particularly in regional and subregional centers served by high capacity transit. The Growing Transit Communities work program has demonstrated that the region's light rail corridors alone have the potential to support this vision by attracting at least 25% of the housing growth and 35% of the employment growth expected in the region through the year 2040. Attracting additional TOD market demand to other regional corridors that are served by other types of high capacity transit is also essential.

To advance the Regional Growth Strategy adopted in VISION 2040, promote economic development, and realize the multiple public benefits of compact growth around rapid transit investments, the signatories to this Compact will strive to:

- Use a full range of tools, investments, and economic development strategies, to attract the potential demand for residential and commercial transit oriented development within transit communities consistent with and in furtherance of regional policies and plans, and
- Plan for and promote residential and employment densities within transit communities that support ridership potential and contribute to accommodating growth needs within each high-capacity transit corridor.

Additional transit communities along the region's other high-capacity transit mode corridors will also attract significant portions of future residential and employment growth.

## Overview of Recommendations

Recommended strategies to attract housing and employment growth to transit communities reflect three overarching objectives:

**Make great urban places that are attractive to households and businesses.** The region can achieve the goal of attracting transit supportive development to station areas with a focus on building neighborhoods that offer safe, high quality urban living, including a critical mass of residential and commercial activity, easy access to local and regional jobs and opportunities, and a rich public realm. Tools to make this happen include not only traditional land use approaches and environmentally sustainable building practices, but also heightened integration of land use with transportation and targeted investments in a range of public assets that meet the needs of current and future residents and businesses.

**Remove barriers to development.** Regional market analysis has shown that demand for housing and commercial space located near rapid transit stations exists in all three light rail corridors. However, existing conditions in some locations are potential barriers to new market development, and include restrictive zoning capacity and other regulatory barriers (e.g., excessive parking requirements), and lack of essential public infrastructure. Removing regulatory barriers through regulatory review and local and regional tools to fund the most pressing infrastructure needs, is important in all transit communities regardless of market conditions, but particularly critical in those with emerging or strong markets.

**Support development in emerging markets.** Market analysis also shows that the light rail corridors include a large number of locations with weaker market conditions where regional accessibility by high capacity transit service may not alone be sufficient to attract new development. This represents a significant challenge for both local jurisdictions and the region. New development in emerging markets should be supported by tools and investments that increase value, reduce costs, and build on existing community assets and market potential.

## Recommended Strategies

6. Conduct station area planning
7. Use land efficiently in transit communities
8. Locate, design and provide access to transit stations to support TOD
9. Adopt innovative parking tools
10. Invest in infrastructure and public realm improvements



## Strategy 6: Conduct Station Area Planning

Station area planning is the process whereby local jurisdictions engage broad community interests to produce a unique vision for a transit community and a blueprint for regulations and investments that successfully attract residential and employment growth consistent with that vision. Each high capacity transit station area should have a dedicated plan, or policies within an existing plan, addressing a comprehensive range of topic areas, including many of the recommendations in the GTC Strategy. In particular, Strategy 11 and Strategy 19 call for in depth housing and community needs assessments that should be part of any comprehensive station area planning process.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 6.1. Amend plans and policies to establish transit communities as a key element of the regional growth strategy to concentrate new population and employment within urban areas in centers linked by a high capacity transit network.
- 6.2. Develop regional guidelines on best practice in station area planning.
- 6.3. Develop guidance and best practices on station area planning. Use PSRC policy and plan review processes to disseminate guidance on station area planning.
- 6.4. Provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions and other agencies to support station area planning.
- 6.5. Create a competitive grant program to fund transit community implementation activities such as strategic planning, code development, feasibility analyses, or predevelopment design.
- 6.6. Adopt criteria for transportation project funding that incentivize local adoption of station area plans that are consistent with regional guidance.

#### Transit Agencies

- 6.7. Participate in local station area planning as an active partner with local jurisdictions and other public agencies and in conjunction with ongoing transit service planning.
- 6.8. Contribute agency resources, where feasible and appropriate, to station area planning efforts.
- 6.9. Implement a TOD strategy that addresses long-range system expansion and service provision, station design and access, property disposition, partnerships with other agencies and local government, and transit-supportive uses and densities.

#### Local Governments

- 6.10. Review existing plans and policies, when they are considered for periodic update, for consistency with regional guidance on station area planning and recommendations contained in the GTC Strategy.
- 6.11. Adopt station area plans and/or policies for all high capacity transit communities which are expected to attract significant new population or employment growth
- 6.12. Use the plan development and update process to identify and address potential regulatory barriers to equitable transit community development.

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities



## Strategy 7: Use Land Efficiently in Transit Communities

Transit communities contain a limited amount of land to accommodate housing, workplaces, retail and services, open space and other public amenities. Attracting growth to transit communities starts with policies and regulations that use that resource wisely and allow sufficient compact development to meet growth and ridership goals along with public and private actions to support those investments.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 7.1 Collaborate with transit agencies and local governments to develop guidance for transit supportive densities. Amend policies and procedures, as appropriate, to include detailed guidance on transit supportive densities and uses, including recommended density ranges for transit communities within each high-capacity transit corridor. Density guidance should be informed by regional policy, current and potential service levels for the transit modes in each location, local plans, and land use and market characteristics.
- 7.2 Refine criteria for transportation project funding and station area plan implementation grants that incentivize zoning for achievement of transit supportive densities that are consistent with regional guidance.
- 7.3 Maintain a regional inventory of developable public lands located within transit communities and provide technical assistance to other public agencies in identifying opportunity sites for TOD.
- 7.4 Leverage existing agency resources to support ongoing evaluation of the supply and demand for residential and commercial development in transit communities.
- 7.5 Collaborate with transit agencies and local governments on continued efforts to align transit service and local land use decisions, such as through implementation of the Transit Service Overlay Zone concept.

#### Transit Agencies

- 7.6 Collaborate with regional and local governments to develop guidance for transit supportive densities. Continue efforts to align transit service and local land use decisions, such as through implementation of the Transit Service Overlay Zone concept.
- 7.7 Conduct analyses of TOD potential for properties under consideration for agency acquisition within transit communities.
- 7.8 Adopt land disposition policies and procedures that leverage agency property assets in order to encourage transit supportive densities and affordability in transit communities.
- 7.9 Identify agency owned opportunity sites for joint development and land assembly in transit communities.

#### Local Governments

- 7.10 Collaborate with regional governments and transit agencies to develop guidance for transit supportive densities. Adopt land use plans and zoning regulations that accommodate and promote transit supportive uses and densities that are consistent with regional guidance.
- 7.11 Align surplus lands disposition policies with local and regional TOD objectives.
- 7.12 Identify city or county owned sites with potential for joint development and land assembly for TOD projects.
- 7.13 Conduct a land supply and capacity analysis for each high capacity transit station area. Build upon existing work and resources, such as periodic *Buildable Lands* evaluations.

#### State

- 7.14 Adopt legislation to give public agencies greater flexibility in disposing of surplus lands for the purposes of transit oriented development in station areas, including the ability to discount property sale price where long-term housing affordability is provided.

#### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities



## Strategy 8: Locate, Design, and Provide Access to Transit Stations to Support TOD

Decisions about the siting and design of transit facilities can have a significant impact on the potential for building transit communities within a given corridor. Current and future community members are best served and ridership potential is best supported where transit systems are designed to foster long-term TOD potential and connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and communities.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 8.1 Consistent with existing regional policies and plans that call for integrating land use and transportation investments, refine regional policy guidance to clarify that, where possible, transit alignments and station location and design choices should promote TOD throughout the region, including in designated regional centers and other locations with potential for concentrated residential and/or employment uses.

#### Transit Agencies

- 8.2 Strengthen criteria for selecting transit alignments and station locations to include TOD potential alongside other criteria such as environmental impacts, costs, and ridership potential. TOD potential should reflect both existing and planned uses and densities within transit station areas.
- 8.3 Design and develop stations to include joint development, where feasible, with market rate and affordable residential, commercial, or civic and other public uses.
- 8.4 Design stations to provide multimodal access to transit, including on foot, bicycle, and via connections with other transit services.
- 8.5 Implement transit access and parking management strategies that support and encourage access via multiple modes of travel to the transit system, and that provide alternatives to automobile travel through approaches, such as: transit service connections to surrounding neighborhoods, bicycle and pedestrian connections, and demand management strategies (e.g., parking fees).
- 8.6 Where parking at transit stations is needed, support TOD potential through tools such as parking structure siting and design that complements walkable and active streets and public spaces, interim parking strategies including facilities that can be redeveloped with residential or commercial uses in the future, and shared parking with nearby uses.
- 8.7 Coordinate planning and capital investment activities with those of other public agencies, including other transit agencies, local governments, and state agencies such as WSDOT.

#### Local Governments

- 8.8 Collaborate with transit agencies on alignment of new transit facilities, station siting and design, and system access planning.
- 8.9 Adopt land use regulations and capital improvement plans that are consistent with and support transit corridor access strategies, to include zoning for transit supportive densities and funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
- 8.10 Coordinate land use planning and capital investment activities with transit agencies, including items such as transit corridor access strategies, zoning for transit-supportive densities, and funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

#### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Communities with fixed guideway transit, such as light rail, streetcar, commuter rail
- Communities with multimodal transit centers
- Communities undergoing planning and implementation of new transit investments





## Strategy 9: Adopt Innovative Parking Tools

Frequent and reliable transit service within walking distance of housing and commercial uses reduces the amount of parking needed as part of new development. Requirements for parking that are inflexible and exceed demand can drive up development costs and resulting prices and rents, and may render new development infeasible. A range of innovative parking tools are available for use in transit communities that are effective in supporting TOD while meeting the limited parking needs of a transit rich environment.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 9.1 Develop guidance on parking management best practices and innovative tools for use in transit station areas. Disseminate guidance on parking management through PSRC policy and plan review processes.
- 9.2 Collaborate with King County to further develop the data and tools included in the Right Size Parking project for application in transit communities throughout the region.
- 9.3 Establish criteria for transportation project funding that incentivize local adoption of comprehensive parking management strategies and innovative best practices (see 9.6).

#### Transit Agencies

- 9.4 Work with local governments and other transit agencies to coordinate implementation of access plans for transit stations and parking management strategies for station areas.

#### Local Governments

- 9.5 Adopt a district-wide management strategy for both on- and off-street parking as part of the station area plan or policies.
- 9.6 Adopt, where appropriate, innovative off-street parking management tools, such as:
  - Flexible or market-driven parking regulations
  - Reduced or eliminated parking requirements for special populations, such as seniors, and in locations with access to frequent transit
  - Limits on the maximum amount of parking that can be included in a development,
  - “Unbundling” the cost of parking from housing unit prices/rents
  - Shared parking facilities
  - Support for car sharing options
  - Transportation demand management
- 9.7 Where parking demand is high, adopt on-street parking management strategies, such as metered parking and residential parking zones.

#### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities





## Strategy 10: Invest in Infrastructure and Public Realm Improvements

Local governments and private developers have identified insufficient infrastructure and community amenities as major barriers to new residential and commercial development in transit communities. For example, data indicate that many current and potential station areas within the light rail corridors lack the street networks, sidewalks, parks, and other public facilities desired for livable transit communities. A regional strategy to provide sufficient infrastructure and enhance the public realm includes creating new funding tools and targeting existing funds for maximum benefit. Provision of this infrastructure is an opportunity to achieve multiple environmental and health benefits.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 10.1 Among projects funded by PSRC, include transportation improvements that enhance the TOD orientation and market potential of existing and future transit communities, such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities, street improvements that accommodate multiple modes and users, and projects that improve connectivity within a transit community.
- 10.2 In order to leverage existing and potential market demand for TOD, give priority to 1) projects located where current TOD orientation is low and market demand is transitional to very strong, and 2) projects located where current TOD orientation is high and current market demand is weak to moderate.
- 10.3 Provide regional guidance on street design and public realm improvements that have a positive environmental health impact and promote green building techniques in transit communities.
- 10.4 Continue to convene and support regional coalitions of public and private stakeholders to develop new and expanded financing tools for infrastructure and other public investments.

#### Transit Agencies

- 10.5 Collaborate with local governments, transit providers, and other public agencies to evaluate transit access and connectivity needs early in the planning and design process and to identify and fund station area infrastructure improvements.
- 10.6 Design transit facilities to connect to and complement adjacent land uses and public realm infrastructure.

#### Local Governments

- 10.7 Encourage new development through integrated capital facilities, land use, and economic development and investments.
- 10.8 Utilize, where appropriate, existing tools to fund infrastructure improvements, including value capture tools, local improvement districts, and local taxing authority.
- 10.9 Identify priority public improvements needed in transit communities, including transportation infrastructure, civic facilities, parks and open space, and other public realm enhancements. Amend policies, codes, or programs as may be necessary to support the acquisition or development of sites for such improvements.
- 10.10 Explore options for dedicated funding for improvements to the public realm in transit communities.

#### State

- 10.11 Adopt legislation authorizing new value capture financing tools for use by local jurisdictions to fund infrastructure improvements and affordable housing in transit communities.

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities

# Strategies to Provide Affordable Housing Choices



**Goal: Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high-capacity transit.**

Adopted regional policy recognizes housing as a basic human need and calls for local policies and tools that provide for an adequate supply of housing affordable at all income levels, to meet the diverse needs of both current and future residents. Region-wide, affordable housing need is defined by current household incomes, where 18% of households earn between 50% and 80% of AMI, 12% earn between 30% and 50% of AMI, and 13% earn less than 30% of AMI. In transit communities, projected need for affordable housing is higher, especially for households in the lowest income range due to their greater reliance on transit. Depending on local market conditions, efforts to meet that need will focus on new housing, housing preservation, or combined strategies.

In order to meet a substantial portion of this need within walking distance of rapid transit services, the signatories to this Compact will strive to:

- Use a full range of housing preservation tools to maintain the existing level of affordable housing within each transit community, and
- Use a full range of housing production tools and incentives to provide sufficient affordable housing choices for all economic and demographic groups within transit corridors, including new housing in the region's transit communities collectively that is proportional to region-wide need or greater to serve transit-dependent households.

These goals apply to the region's transit corridors collectively, and do not suggest a specific desired outcome for any individual transit community. Further, fully attaining these goals will require new tools, resources, and subsidies beyond those that exist today.

These affordable housing goals are based on regional income data and forecasts of TOD demand produced for the GTC Partnership by the Center for Transit Oriented Development. These strategies reinforce and expand upon existing tools and resources. Because housing goals for transit communities will not be fully attainable by governments and housing providers in the region without an increase in the total amount of available housing subsidy, the strategies also include coordinated efforts to secure new and increased resources.

## Overview of Recommendations

Recommended strategies to provide housing choices reflect three overarching objectives. First, local jurisdictions should define and quantify housing needs for each transit community when undergoing station area or other planning processes. Understanding housing needs for all income levels and demographic groups identified in VISION 2040 is a necessary starting point for adopting the appropriate mix and scale of public and private sector tools. Second, with the paramount importance of preserving existing housing and supplying new housing choices in proximity to transit investments, a full range of resources should be made available, and in fact targeted, to transit communities. The toolbox includes regulations, incentives, requirements, subsidies, environmentally sustainable development techniques, and other programs. Finally, the overall housing strategy should to the extent possible capitalize on the economic value created by the private market, enhanced by transit investments, in order to achieve the broadest range of affordability in market rate housing and additional below market rate units.

Appropriate strategies and tools for particular transit communities may vary and should be informed by the local housing needs assessment and the transit community typology. For example, transit communities with high current levels of affordability may focus on maintaining housing choices through preservation. In communities with less current affordability, appropriate tools may focus more on new affordable housing production. In all cases, ensuring housing at all affordability levels is healthy and safe is essential.

For the purposes of these strategies, “affordable housing” includes subsidized and market-rate housing affordable to lower income households at various income levels, including 0%-30% of AMI, 30%-50% of AMI and 50%-80% of AMI, unless defined by a local jurisdiction’s housing needs assessment to also include housing affordable to higher incomes.

VISION 2040 uses the following household income categories and definitions to track regional housing affordability:

**Middle:** 80-120% of area median income

**Moderate:** 50-80% of area median income

**Low:** 30-50% of area median income

**Very Low:** Below 30% area median income

The names of these ranges differ from those used by HUD and others.

## Recommended Strategies

11. Assess current and future housing needs in transit communities
12. Minimize displacement through affordable housing preservation and replacement
13. Increase housing resources to support transit-dependent populations
14. Implement a TOD property acquisition fund
15. Expand value capture financing as a tool for infrastructure and affordable housing
16. Make surplus public lands available for affordable housing
17. Leverage market value through incentives for affordability
18. Implement recommendations of regional fair housing assessment



## Strategy 11: Assess Current and Future Housing Needs in Transit Communities

A transit community housing needs assessment determines the current and future demand for housing affordable to different income groups and provides the context for appropriate tools and programs to meet the housing needs. The assessment would be triggered by larger planning efforts, such as station area, subarea, or comprehensive planning. Housing needs assessments would be informed by regional and countywide guidance and technical assistance, and would in turn inform locally determined housing goals and strategies. The assessments should address, at minimum, housing needs for lower income households at various income levels, including 0%-30% of AMI, 30%-50% of AMI and 50%-80% of AMI.

### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 11.1. Develop regional guidance on best practice in conducting a transit community housing needs assessment. The assessment should address housing supply and demand for households at all income levels identified in VISION 2040 as well as housing needs related to demographic groups, special needs populations, and workers at all income levels.
- 11.2. Provide data and support coordination among jurisdictions to ensure that housing goals and strategies complement one another and address cumulatively the regional housing goals for transit communities.
- 11.3. Develop guidance on the recommended format and content for a transit community housing needs assessment and plan. Disseminate such guidance through PSRC policy and plan review processes.
- 11.4. Amend transportation funding criteria to provide incentives for adoption of transit community affordable housing assessments, plans, and implementation tools.
- 11.5. Carry out VISION 2040 H-action-1, the development of a Regional Housing Strategy. As part of the strategy, specifically address housing supply and demand in transit communities.
- 11.6. Build on PSRC's existing Housing Innovations Program (HIP) website to include resources and models for affordable housing assessment, station area plans, and tools appropriate to preserve and increase affordable housing supply in transit communities.

### Transit Agencies

- 11.7. Review and use available data on housing needs, including local housing needs assessments, in station area planning and TOD policy implementation. Incorporate results of housing needs assessments in TOD-related decisions, including the acquisition and disposition of properties.

### Local Governments

- 11.8. Conduct a transit community housing needs assessment consistent with regional guidance.
- 11.9. Conduct an inventory of existing housing, including the cost, size, condition, and use of subsidies of existing units, as part of the housing needs assessment and use this information to identify potential sites for preservation and/or replacement.
- 11.10. Based on the findings of the housing needs assessment, and consistent with Countywide Planning Policies, adopt quantitative and qualitative affordable housing goals for lower income households at various income levels, including 0%-30% of AMI, 30%-50% of AMI and 50%-80% of AMI and a strategy to achieve goals as the transit community grows.
- 11.11. Plan for, preserve, and encourage the development of affordable housing in transit communities consistent with the housing element in the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.
- 11.12. Plan for and encourage a range of housing types, designs, and tenure to meet the needs of a full range of demographic and household profiles. This may include rental and ownership housing, housing with universal design, higher density housing types, mid-density housing types (e.g., cottage, accessory dwelling units, and townhomes), housing units with two or more bedrooms to meet the needs of families.

### Affordable Housing Providers

- 11.13. Contribute to housing needs assessments through data sharing and technical review.

## Recommended Actions

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high-capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities
- Any transit community undergoing station area or subarea planning



## Strategy 12: Minimize Displacement through Affordable Housing Preservation and Replacement

Among the many challenges communities face in pursuing mutually supportive economic development and social equity objectives, the risk of displacement looms large. Many transit communities are home to existing low- and moderate-income households at potential risk of displacement due to increased market strength and gentrification that may accompany transit system development. Strategies to preserve the existing affordable housing stock in good condition or to replace affordable housing demolished due to new development can help minimize these displacement risks while accommodating new market-rate investment. Although preservation and replacement strategies were not a central component of the GTC Partnership work program, they are critical to the long-term success of these communities and should be a focus area for future work. The goal guiding this strategy is to ensure a “no net loss” of existing affordable housing units in transit communities.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 12.1. Expand the existing Housing Innovations Program to provide more detailed guidance and technical assistance to local governments and other regional partners on affordable housing preservation tools that can be used in transit communities.
- 12.2. Work with regional partners to develop data and methods to provide for an “early warning system” to identify properties in transit communities that contain affordable units that are at risk of displacement or conversion.
- 12.3. Work with local governments and housing providers to maintain a regional database of publicly subsidized housing stock.

#### Transit Agencies

- 12.4. Minimize the displacement of affordable housing. Where displacement occurs, assist where feasible in replacement of those units.

#### Local Governments

- 12.5. Conduct an inventory of existing affordable housing as part of the housing needs assessment and use this information to identify potential sites for preservation and/or replacement.
- 12.6. Use available tools and resources to encourage that both subsidized and market-rate affordable units that are lost due to redevelopment in a transit community are replaced with units at the same affordability level within that transit community.
- 12.7. Use incentive programs for developers to preserve or replace subsidized and market-rate affordable units. (See Strategy 17)

#### Affordable Housing Developers, Financiers, and Community Organizations

- 12.8. Adopt funding policies and criteria that support and encourage both development and preservation of affordable housing in transit communities, where mobility and access to jobs and services is higher. Work with regional partners to identify and advocate for new dedicated funds and tools to support affordable housing preservation.
- 12.9. Pursue funding for rehabilitation of affordable housing stock, such as the federal Neighborhood Stabilization and Weatherization Assistance programs.
- 12.10. Create the capacity to acquire and hold land and buildings for future affordable housing development that includes preservation, using tools such as a regional TOD property acquisition fund (Strategy 14).

#### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with potential or immediate risk of displacement
- Transit communities with existing affordable housing stock



## Strategy 13: Increase Housing Resources to Support Transit-Dependent Populations

There are currently several sources for affordable housing subsidy at the local, regional, and state levels. Targeting a portion of those funds to projects in transit communities can be a way to produce more affordable housing for transit-dependent populations. In addition, using tools such as Opportunity Mapping to inform housing subsidy allocations can help create greater access to high-opportunity neighborhoods for low-income households. The following actions will be most effective in conjunction with strategies to grow the overall amount of available resources for affordable housing, such as through housing levies or similar funding, value capture financing, and a TOD property acquisition fund.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 13.1 Amend plans and policies to call for investment of housing resources that support and encourage the development and preservation of affordable housing in transit communities.
- 13.2 Provide technical support to housing funders and developers in defining transit community nodes and boundaries for the purposes of making funding and programmatic decisions.

#### Local Governments

- 13.3 Adopt policies that support and encourage funding for the development and preservation of affordable housing in transit communities.
- 13.4 Expand the capacity of locally-generated housing funds, such as through support for development and passage of a local, sub-regional, or regional housing funding source.

#### Affordable Housing Funders and Developers

- 13.5 Adopt funding policies and criteria that support and encourage the development and preservation of affordable housing in transit communities, where mobility and access to jobs and services is higher.
- 13.6 Consider the People + Place Implementation Typology and Opportunity Mapping data when identifying locations within the region for new production and preservation investments.

#### Affordable Housing Advocacy Organizations

- 13.7 Build on the GTC Partnership to convene a regional coalition to call for new and expanded sources of housing subsidy beyond what is currently available from government and non-governmental sources.

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities
- Transit communities with limited stock of affordable units





## Strategy 14: Implement a TOD Property Acquisition Fund

A TOD Property Acquisition Fund is a tool that has been used with success in other regions to provide financing for the purchase of properties within transit communities before increased land values make affordable housing development or preservation prohibitively difficult. There is strong and ongoing regional cross-sector support for establishing a fund in the central Puget Sound region. Developing and managing such a fund will require significant commitments from the public sector, as well as private foundations and housing development funders. The TOD Fund strategy was a central component of the GTC Partnership work program and is a high priority for implementation.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 14.1 Coordinate with and support the development and management of a regional fund to provide a revolving source of capital available for the acquisition of properties for the development and preservation of affordable housing in transit communities.
- 14.2 Explore options for using a portion of PSRC regionally managed funds to contribute public sector catalyst investments in a TOD property acquisition fund.

#### Transit Agencies

- 14.3 Explore options to contribute to public sector catalyst investments in a TOD property acquisition fund.

#### Local Governments

- 14.4 Explore options for contributing local funds as a portion of regional public sector catalyst investment in a TOD property acquisition fund.

#### TOD Fund Manager

- 14.5 Identify and recruit a broad range of potential contributors of startup capital to the TOD property acquisition fund.
- 14.6 Structure fund governance to maximize input and oversight from regional stakeholders.
- 14.7 Work with PSRC, transit agencies, and local governments to identify target locations and a range of loan products designed to meet the needs for capital in various phases of housing development.

#### Housing authorities, WSHFC

- 14.8 Explore options for contributing capital to the TOD property acquisition fund.

#### Local and National Foundations and Philanthropies

- 14.9 Explore options for contributing capital to the TOD property acquisition fund.

#### CDFIs and other private sector funders

- 14.10 Explore options for contributing capital to the TOD property acquisition fund.

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with limited stock of affordable units
- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities



## Strategy 15: Expand Value Capture Financing as a Tool for Infrastructure and Affordable Housing

Public transit improvements increase the value of nearby properties. A portion of that added value may be captured to finance further public improvements. Developing such value capture financing strategies is a central component of the GTC Partnership work program and is a high priority for implementation in the region and across the state. In addition to various value capture tools currently available in the state, new tools should be considered to ensure that the potential displacement risk to low income households from rising property values is mitigated. Stakeholders should consider the potential benefits of new tools and target currently available tools for use in providing infrastructure and affordable housing in transit station areas.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 15.1 Provide regional guidance on best practices and technical assistance to local jurisdictions on the establishment and administration of value capture tools.
- 15.2 Include in a regional station area plan implementation grant program the option of funding selected feasibility studies for local implementation of value capture financing.
- 15.3 Continue to provide a forum for a coalition of regional stakeholders to advance new and expanded value capture tools in Washington State.

#### Transit Agencies

- 15.4 Support the development and use of value capture financing tools in order to increase transit ridership potential through new development.

#### Local Governments

- 15.5 Support affordable housing development in station areas through the use of existing tools for value capture financing that are authorized under Washington State law, including Community Revitalization Financing, Local Infrastructure Financing Tool, Local Revitalization Financing, Landscape Conservation and Local Infrastructure Program, and Local Improvement District.
- 15.6 Work with property owners and other stakeholders to explore value capture financing tools, as authorized by any future legislation, where market strength and property owner support exists, and major infrastructure projects and housing needs have been identified.

#### State

- 15.7 Adopt legislation authorizing new and expanded value capture financing tools that can be used to generate revenue for affordable housing and infrastructure investments in transit station areas.

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities





## Strategy 16: Make Surplus Public Lands Available for Affordable Housing

Programming the future sustainable use of developable publicly owned surplus properties in transit communities creates a unique opportunity to improve housing options for low income residents and improve transit ridership. Best practices for the use of public lands for affordable housing include joint development, TOD development agreements between landowners and jurisdictions, discount sale, public-private land assembly, and the use of air rights above stations. Expanding state law and removing other legal or programmatic obstacles may facilitate broader use of these tools. A surplus public lands strategy was a central component of the GTC Partnership work program and is a high priority for implementation.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 16.1 Provide guidance on best practices and technical assistance to public agencies and potential private sector development partners.
- 16.2 Maintain a regional inventory of developable public lands in transit communities.

#### Transit Agencies

- 16.3 Develop policies and best practices related to the disposition of properties that support affordable housing production on surplus sites.
- 16.4 Conduct analysis of TOD potential for properties that are considered for acquisition (See Strategy 7.7).

#### Local Governments

- 16.5 Develop policies and employ best practices, where appropriate, related to the acquisition and disposition of properties that support affordable housing on surplus sites.

#### State

- 16.6 Adopt legislation that gives public agencies more flexibility in the disposition of public lands for the public purpose of providing increased affordable housing opportunities in transit station areas, such as through discounted sale, joint development, or other mechanisms.

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities under any stage of light rail system development
- Transit communities with any other identified opportunities for development of surplus lands



## Strategy 17: Leverage Market Value through Incentives for Affordability

Incentives help achieve affordability in rental and ownership housing development, in both multi-family and single-family projects. Statute allows jurisdictions to create required or optional incentive zoning programs for affordable housing when additional development capacity is provided through zoning changes or density bonus programs, thereby ensuring that new development contributes to maintaining and expanding the supply of affordable units. Additionally, other voluntary incentives, such as multi-family tax exemption or fee waivers, may also be used to encourage affordable housing production and preservation. Although developing incentive strategies were not a central component of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership work program, they are critical to the long-term success of these communities and should be a focus area for future work.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 17.1 Provide guidance and technical assistance to support adoption, where appropriate, of incentives for affordable housing in transit communities. Provide ongoing staff support to a broad stakeholder effort to further develop tools for the effective use of required and optional incentive programs tied to an increase in development capacity, through research, education, and state and local statutory changes.
- 17.2 Include in a regional station area plan implementation grant program the option of funding selected feasibility studies for local implementation of required and optional incentive programs for affordable housing.

#### Local Governments

- 17.3 Conduct a feasibility study to evaluate the costs and benefits of potential land use actions and incentives. Based on the feasibility study, adopt regulations that leverage the provision of additional development capacity, such as density or height, to produce and preserve affordable housing units. There are a range of ways to implement such provisions that are sensitive to local conditions and markets. For example, requiring affordability in all developments when increased development capacity is granted outright, or voluntary provisions where additional development capacity is gained in exchange for providing affordable housing.
- 17.4 In all transit communities planning for residential growth, adopt additional incentives for private developers to include affordable units in new residential projects. In determining the appropriate mix of incentives for each community, consider market conditions, housing needs, and existing regulations. Incentives that should be considered for adoption in all transit communities include:
  - Reduced parking requirements for projects that include affordable units
  - Impact or permit fee waivers for projects that include affordable units
  - Use of multifamily tax exemption conditioned to provision of the longest-term and deepest affordability levels feasible
  - Expedited permitting for projects that include affordable units

#### Developers and Financiers

- 17.5 Contribute industry knowledge to the analysis and design of inclusionary and incentive tools by local jurisdictions.

#### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Required or optional incentive zoning programs can be effective in transit communities undergoing updates to plans or regulations that result in added development capacity, especially in transit communities where market strength for TOD is emerging or strong. Additionally, incentive zoning programs may be more appropriate at a larger scale than the half-mile station area.
- Voluntary incentives can be effective in all transit communities where jurisdictions seek to attract residential growth to accompany existing or future high-capacity transit service.



## Strategy 18: Implement Recommendations of Regional Fair Housing Assessment

Fair housing is housing that is available to anyone, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, family status, disability, or national origin, and free of barriers to housing choice in communities throughout the region. In order to foster compliance with the federal Fair Housing Act, communities receiving support from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) community planning and development programs are obligated to affirmatively further fair housing. This means identifying barriers to fair housing choice and carrying out action plans to overcome the effects of these impediments. The objective is to eliminate housing discrimination and provide opportunities for inclusive patterns of housing occupancy. Communities must address fair housing for the “protected classes” listed above, and can choose to add in additional ones to this list and many corridor communities have chosen to do so. These policies need not be restricted to HUD assisted communities, but should be focused in all transit station areas where diversity and inclusiveness are vital.

PSRC has developed a Regional Fair Housing Group that is working with HUD’s guidance to conduct a Fair Housing Equity Assessment (FHEA) across the region. The FHEA will identify barriers to fair housing choice that reach across jurisdictional lines, and will identify areas of increasing segregation and racially/ethnically concentrated areas of poverty. The FHEA will highlight disparities in access to opportunity across the region and evaluate the equity of transit improvements across the region. Trends in discrimination cases, fair housing testing, mortgage lending practices, and capacity of fair housing enforcement agencies will be assessed. Action strategies of the FHEA will outline how different governmental and non-governmental partners can work across the region to remove barriers to fair housing. Tools to promote fair housing may include fair housing legislation, fair housing enforcement, mobility improvements, and zoning codes.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 18.1 Work with regional partners to identify barriers to fair housing choice, develop actions to address barriers, and implement recommendations of the FHEA.

#### Transit Agencies

- 18.2 Participate in the development of the FHEA and consider its final implementation recommendations during project planning and development.

#### Local Governments

- 18.3 Implement universal design principles with policies and regulations that meet or exceed federal and state standards to ensure that development and public spaces are accessible to people with disabilities and other special needs.
- 18.4 Promote fair housing practices in station areas through actions such as targeting fair housing outreach and educational resources to these areas, and building capacity of community groups to do outreach and education.
- 18.5 Participate in the development of the FHEA and its final implementation recommendations.

#### State

- 18.6 Adopt state legislation that prohibits housing discrimination against rental subsidy holders.

#### Housing Enforcement Agencies

- 18.7 Support fair housing planning in station areas with focused fair housing testing, enforcement, and education and outreach strategies in these areas

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Fair housing strategies are applicable to all transit communities in the region.

# Strategies to Improve Access to Opportunity



**Goal: Increase access to opportunity for existing and future residents of transit communities.**

Adopted regional policy recognizes the need to address the diverse housing, transportation, and economic needs of current and future residents so that all people may prosper as the region grows. This requires special attention to communities that lack access to transportation choices, quality schools, and other social and physical neighborhood components that allow community members to thrive and succeed.

In order to more equitably meet the needs of all residents of the region, the signatories to this Compact will strive to:

- Improve access to opportunity in the transit corridors through targeted investments that meet the needs of residents and businesses in communities with limited access to opportunity, targeted affordable housing investments in communities with good access to opportunity, and transit connections linking areas with good access to opportunity and areas with limited access to opportunity.
- Use a full range of community engagement strategies to increase the involvement of diverse and historically under-represented groups in transit community development, empower communities to influence decisions at all levels of government, and ensure opportunities for participation throughout decision-making processes.

## Overview of Recommendations

Recommended strategies to increase access to opportunity reflect three overarching objectives:

**Understand regional disparities and gaps along with local community needs that impact access to opportunity.** The opportunity mapping analysis conducted by PSRC in consultation with the Kirwan Institute at the Ohio State University has revealed a widespread pattern within the region of inequitable access to educational, economic, transportation, environmental health, and neighborhood resources. While the overall opportunity score can inform regional priorities and approaches, additional local analysis and ongoing

monitoring and updating is needed in order to show which programs and investments should be targeted to each location in order to address identified disparities.

**Identify existing and potential new resources and tools that may be used to meet community needs.**

Each of the five opportunity areas identified in these strategies may be addressed by general purpose government, special purpose public agencies, non-profits, foundation support, and through other private sector investment. Effective approaches will leverage the potential for partnerships across sectors. Success will depend as well on balancing strategies to address overall community needs with place-based strategies that focus specifically on transit communities. By advancing work to define and measure equity within the region, the Growing Transit Communities Partnership has provided a foundation for these efforts.

**Build support for equitable opportunities through education, coalitions, and leadership.** In an era of limited resources, both public and private entities must demonstrate that their investments effectively meet the most pressing community needs. The commitment to invest in our communities can be bolstered first by raising awareness of regional disparities and the link between social equity and regional prosperity. Political support is built and sustained through broad-based coalitions, such as that assembled for the Equity Network, and also by policy makers and community leaders championing a regional vision of equity and equitable transit community development.

## **Recommended Strategies**

19. Assess community needs
20. Invest in environmental and public health
21. Invest in economic vitality and opportunity
22. Invest in equitable mobility options
23. Invest in equitable access to high quality education
24. Invest in public safety in transit communities



## Strategy 19: Assess Community Needs

The Puget Sound Regional Council has developed a framework and technical approach to measuring equitable access to opportunity within the region. Application of this tool, called opportunity mapping, to the region as a whole, including identification of many locations with an overall low level of opportunity across a spectrum of community needs, shows that more detailed analysis is warranted in many transit communities as a basis for making informed community investment decisions. Local governments, working with communities and other stakeholders, should assess equitable access to opportunity as part of larger planning processes, such as station area, subarea, or comprehensive planning. Community needs assessments should be informed by regional guidance and technical assistance, and could in turn inform goals and strategies to improve local access to opportunity and other social equity outcomes.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 19.1. Maintain, update regularly, and make available the opportunity mapping database as a regional resource for community development planning and investment.
- 19.2. Work with local jurisdictions to use the opportunity mapping score to identify neighborhoods needing further assessment at a local scale.
- 19.3. Collaborate with other agencies and the regional Equity Network, or its successor, to develop and make available to local governments a toolkit for community needs assessment that addresses the six opportunity areas of environmental and public health, economic vitality, mobility, education, and neighborhood quality of life.
- 19.4. Adopt guidelines for local station area planning that address access to opportunity and the potential need to conduct a community needs assessment.

#### Transit Agencies

- 19.5. Consider community needs assessments and opportunity mapping analyses in transit system development and long-range planning processes.

#### Local Governments

- 19.6. Incorporate the results of the regional opportunity mapping in local station area planning, and, where needed, conduct a more detailed local assessment of community needs.
- 19.7. Involve community members in developing a profile of community assets and needs around transit stations.
- 19.8. Incorporate into local practice lessons learned and models for community needs assessment developed through the GTC equity grants.
- 19.9. Inventory, and explore tools to create, maintain, and protect community anchors and gathering spaces, such as community centers, cultural centers, event spaces, and others, that nurture civic and social engagement.

#### Regional Equity Network and Advocacy Organizations

- 19.10. Collaborate with PSRC and other agencies in developing and disseminating community needs assessment tools for use by public and private sector.

#### Foundations and Social and Community Service Agencies

- 19.11. Use opportunity mapping and local community needs assessment findings in philanthropic strategies and service programming within the region.

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Very low, Low, or Moderate access to opportunity per the opportunity mapping exercise
- Transit communities with current high-capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities





## Strategy 20: Invest in Environmental and Public Health

How we design our cities has an immense impact on the health of people who live in them. Healthy communities include safe and healthy housing, opportunities for recreation and non-motorized travel, and are free from environmental or other negative health hazards. Evidence increasingly shows that land use and transportation planning decisions impact whether people can easily choose to be physically active, eat nutritious food, and live in safe and environmentally healthy places. Bringing public health into planning decisions is also a strategy for ensuring that all people and communities have the opportunities to make healthy choices regardless of their income, education, or ethnic background. In addition, accommodating more of the region's population growth in compact, complete and connected communities helps protect rural lands, farms, forests, and wildlife habitat from incompatible development, thereby preserving access to open space and a higher quality of life for the entire region.

### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 20.1 Strengthen public health benefits as a criterion for promoting funding for projects in transit communities that enhance non-motorized options, such as walking and bicycling.
- 20.2 Collaborate with public health agencies in the region to develop and disseminate Healthy Transit Community Principles as an assessment and planning tool for local governments. The Northgate Healthy Community Principles may provide a model for a regional tool.

### Transit Agencies

- 20.3 Encourage bicycling and walking by strengthening policies to encourage and fund safe non-motorized access to transit. (See Strategy 22)

### Local Governments

- 20.4 Use Healthy Transit Community Principles as foundational element in station area planning and implementation.
- 20.5 Invest in infrastructure for non-motorized travel, to include sidewalks, trails, bicycle facilities, and safety features for both pedestrians and bicyclists. Prioritize active travel modes in facilities planning and capital expenditures.
- 20.6 Provide sufficient parks and open spaces that are accessible to and meet the needs of current and anticipated future transit community members.
- 20.7 Improve access to affordable, healthy food through land use and economic development strategies.
- 20.8 Promote healthy housing by mitigating the potential noise and air quality impacts of proximity to busy roadways, such as freeways, such as through proactive land use regulations and building codes.

### Public Health Agencies

- 20.9 Site facilities in transit communities or include transit access criteria in facilities siting decisions, where practicable.

### Regional Equity Network and Advocacy Organizations

- 20.10 Engage community members on the benefits of walking and bicycling in coordination with local planning efforts and funding decisions.
- 20.11 Identify and advocate for strategic investments in transit communities that can protect and improve community and regional public health and the environment.

## Recommended Actions

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high-capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities
- Communities that score low on the Opportunity Mapping Health and Environment index



## Strategy 21: Invest in Economic Vitality and Opportunity

Stakeholders across sectors call for greater coordination of economic development with high-capacity transit investments. While the economic development inherent to attracting growth will help support vibrant transit communities, additional strategies are needed to attract and retain existing and locally-owned businesses and to link transit community residents to family wage jobs. These economic development strategies were not a central component of the Growing Transit Communities work program, yet they are critical to the long-term success of these communities and should be a focus area for future work.

### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 21.1 Use the opportunity mapping analysis to guide implementation of the central Puget Sound region's Regional Economic Strategy wherever appropriate, such as through workforce development for residents of limited access to opportunity areas, employment opportunities in growth sectors, and transportation connections to employment centers.
- 21.2 Target outreach efforts for the Regional Economic Strategy's planned Action Plan for women and minority-owned businesses to include the Equity Network and businesses within current and planned light rail station areas.
- 21.3 Promote greater representation of small, locally- and minority-owned businesses on the regional coalition, the Prosperity Partnership.
- 21.4 Promote better integration with VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040 in the next update to the Regional Economic Strategy. Encourage place-based strategies that locate jobs in transit communities and increase access to living-wage jobs throughout the region.
- 21.5 Highlight in the next update to the Regional Economic Strategy the need to improve transit access to employment as a means to achieve both economic development and equity objectives.
- 21.6 Adapt for regional application the lessons learned and recommendations from the work on small business retention and attraction conducted for the East Corridor Implementation Support project.
- 21.7 Work with local jurisdictions and appropriate stakeholders to explore tools to increase access to family wage jobs, such as through economic development, community benefits agreements, living wage ordinances, and other innovative approaches.

### Transit Agencies

- 21.8 Work with local jurisdictions, as part of required environmental review processes, to identify business types or districts within transit communities that may be affected by transit investments.
- 21.9 Develop and maintain policies to encourage local hiring and outreach to women and minority-owned businesses in bidding processes.
- 21.10 Use a range of locally appropriate and effective tools to promote small business retention in impacted business districts.

### Local Governments

- 21.11 Work with transit agencies to identify business types or districts within transit communities that may be at risk of adverse impacts from transit facility development or from subsequent land use and market changes.
- 21.12 Adopt economic development strategies, including business planning and technical assistance, and business attraction, retention, and stabilization, in order to support small businesses near transit that serve neighborhoods and broader cultural communities.
- 21.13 Promote greater multi-sector commercial diversity and employment opportunities through innovative zoning policies to encourage variety in the types of buildings and commercial uses and spaces in mixed-use zones.

### Local chamber of commerce, business associations, community development corporations, labor organizations

- 21.14 Provide proactive technical assistance and collaborate with public sector agencies to develop community-based strategies to support business attraction and retention in transit station areas.

## Recommended Actions

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Current and planned light rail station areas or other regionally significant transit communities in need of strategies to promote business retention.
- Communities that score low on the Opportunity Mapping Economic Health index



## Strategy 22: Invest in Equitable Mobility Options

While high-capacity transit permits greater connectivity between the region's centers and transit nodes, there remains tremendous need to increase access to and funding for the high-capacity transit system for community residents and improve other mobility modes—such as local transit service, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure—within transit communities. The community engagement in current light rail station areas reveals that areas with greater immigrant populations are faced with greater impediments to accessing transit and the opportunity mapping analysis demonstrates that lower-income communities are correlated with needs for more mobility infrastructure investments. Improving mobility in these communities will open up greater access to education and employment, promote public health, and reduce transportation-related household expenses.

### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 22.1 Ensure that regional transportation policies, plans, and funding criteria address social equity and the needs of transit dependent populations.
- 22.2 Use opportunity mapping to prioritize transportation infrastructure improvements to improve connectivity between residents of low-opportunity communities and locations with relatively high levels of employment, educational, and social opportunity.

### Transit Agencies

- 22.3 Develop and maintain transit fares and programs, including the Regional Reduced Fare Permit, that provide affordable access to residents at all income levels.
- 22.4 Adopt programs and practices that make transit more legible, accessible, and usable to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- 22.5 Improve transit access for transit dependent populations, where funding permits and where supported by land uses, including frequent all-day service, bus service to fill service gaps that may be created between rail transit stops, and expanded local transit access to regional high-capacity transit.
- 22.6 Use opportunity mapping, or similar analyses, in transit service planning to provide enhanced transit connectivity between communities with good access to opportunity and residents of communities with limited access to opportunity.

### Local Governments

- 22.7 Invest in facilities that increase connectivity and safety within transit communities, especially to transit stops and destinations frequented by communities of color, low-income residents, seniors, children, and people with disabilities.
- 22.8 Invest in programs that encourage residents of communities with limited access to opportunity to use non-motorized travel alternatives, such as bicycling programs, neighborhood walking maps, and safe routes to school efforts.

### State

- 22.9 Adopt legislation providing greater options for local and regional governments to raise revenues for transit service.

### Regional Equity Network and Advocacy Organizations

- 22.10 Build and maintain coalitions to advocate for state, regional, and local actions to increase funding for transit service in the region.

## Recommended Actions

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high-capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities
- Communities that score low on the Opportunity Mapping Equitable Mobility index



## Strategy 23: Invest in Equitable Access to High Quality Education

Access to a quality education is a critical building block to a thriving and successful life. Currently there is established disparity in access to quality K-12 schools and higher education opportunities across the region's communities, both in terms of physical access to educational institutions and the education quality of the institutions themselves. The recommended actions in this strategy focus on the former: land use and transportation investments that improve physical access to education institutions. Identifying solutions to education quality barriers will require coordination and action across jurisdictions and sectors. Although these education quality strategies were not a central component of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership work program and are not addressed directly in the GTC Strategy, they are critical to the long-term success of these communities. Future work in this area will need to involve stakeholders that include a broad spectrum of educational providers and community representatives.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 23.1 As part of the planned convening of higher education leaders to discuss whether higher education should be an identified industry cluster in the next update to the Regional Economic Strategy, address issues related to equitable access to higher education within the region.
- 23.2 Consider geographic targeting of job training programs and other vocational programs to communities with limited access to opportunity areas as part of implementation of the Regional Economic Strategy.

#### Transit Agencies

- 23.3 Consider the unique mobility needs of both students and staff at educational facilities.

#### Local Governments

- 23.4 Coordinate growth planning with education providers to promote the location of schools in proximity to transit and additional or expanded facilities in communities where new residential growth, especially households with children, is anticipated.

#### School Districts

- 23.5 Adopt policies and criteria that encourage new and expanded facilities in locations with a high level of transit service or planned for high-capacity transit in the future.
- 23.6 Incorporate local and regional growth plans and forecasts in facilities planning, including identifying potential school needs in transit communities.

### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high-capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities
- Communities that score low on the Opportunity Mapping Access to Quality Education index



## Strategy 24: Invest in Public Safety in Transit Communities

Many stakeholders have identified public safety as a critical component of successful transit communities. A sense of public safety results from many factors, including real or perceived safety risk, quality and design of active and well-lit public spaces, and age and condition of buildings and housing stock. The recommended actions in this strategy focus on land use and transportation policies and investments that may enhance activity in public spaces and improve public safety. Such strategic community investments may help reduce neighborhood crime and increase community engagement. Although these strategies were not a central component of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership work program, they are critical to the long-term success of these communities and should be a focus area for future work.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

24.1 Provide technical assistance and data where applicable to support local efforts to enhance neighborhood quality of life in transit communities.

#### Transit Agencies

24.2 Design transit stations as safe and inviting public spaces.

24.3 Provide for community safety through effective transit system policing.

24.4 Partner with community members and local public safety providers on facility design and transit security.

#### Local Governments

24.5 Incorporate design principles for improving activity and safety in public spaces, such as the current Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CEPTED), into land use codes and design guidelines for new transit community development.

24.6 Prioritize effective public safety patrols and response to transit communities with identified public safety needs to ensure the safety of both community residents and other transit station patrons.

#### Community and Cultural Organizations

24.7 Work with local governments and transit agencies to highlight community and enhancement opportunities and public safety needs.

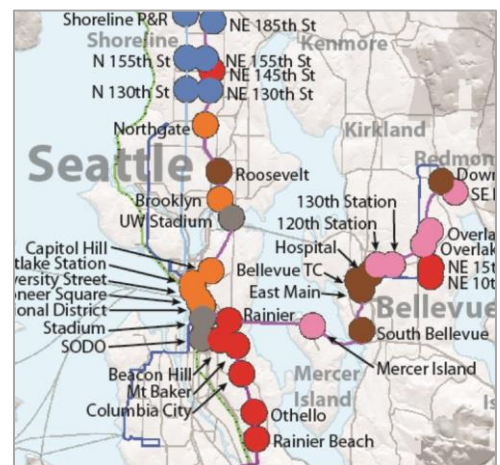
### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high-capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities
- Communities that score low on the Opportunity Mapping Neighborhood and Housing Quality index





# People + Place Implementation Typology

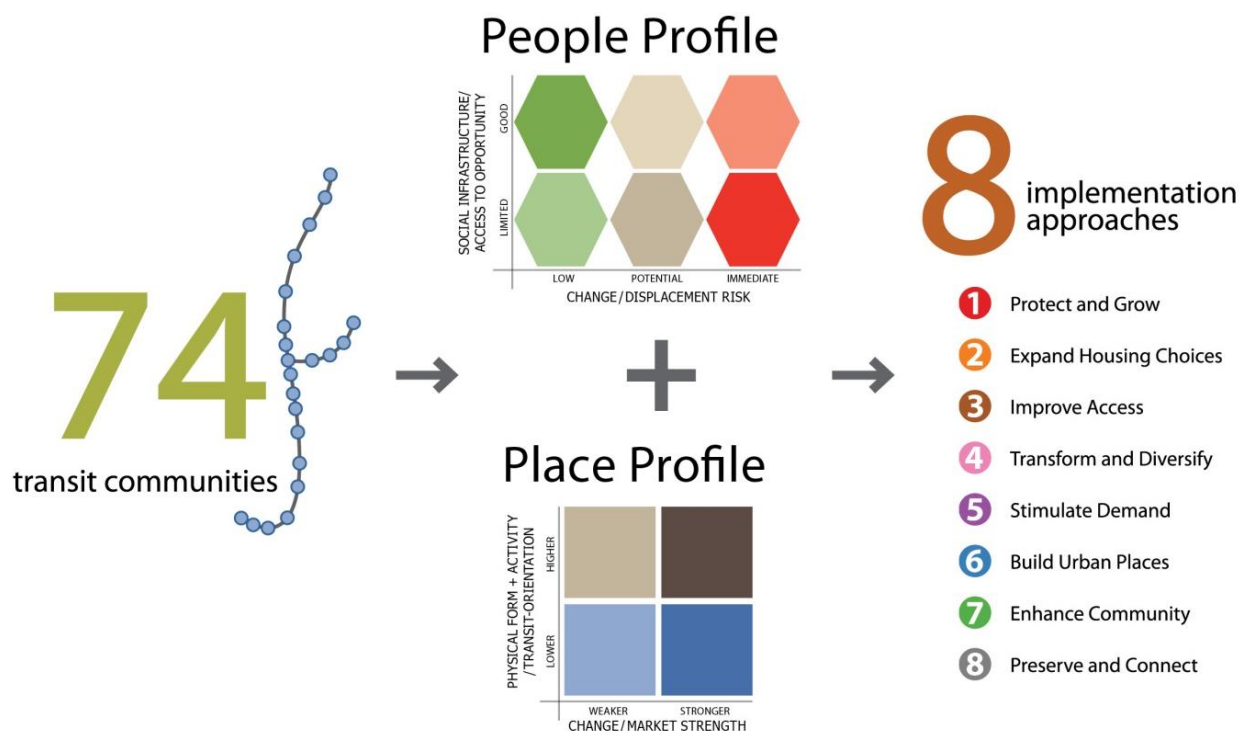




# People + Place Implementation Typology

No two transit communities are alike. They serve different functions in the region, such as dense downtown central business districts, regional industrial job centers, smaller mixed-use neighborhood districts, and commuter stations. At the local level, these places vary in their needs for infrastructure and housing investments, just as the people who live and work in these communities differ in their access to education, employment, housing, and other amenities and services to allow them to lead a successful life. Moreover, the local visions for these communities may differ greatly in terms of the amount and scale of future residential and employment growth anticipated. Accordingly, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to the strategies that will help a transit community thrive and grow with equitable outcomes for current and future community members.

The GTC Partnership recognized this need to tailor implementation approaches to different types of communities. The resulting typology provides guidance on strategies for different transit community types based on existing characteristics of the place and the people who live and work there now. Many station area typologies developed in other regions have described the current or aspirational physical characteristics of different transit communities. An *implementation* typology, on the other hand, classifies transit communities according to the types of strategies that will be most meaningful to help achieve desired outcomes. The GTC Partnership developed the implementation typology to connect strategies to the three overarching program goals: attract residential and employment growth, provide affordable housing choices, and increase equitable access to opportunity.



**Figure 3: The People + Place Implementation Typology Framework**

The 74 transit communities were evaluated using two screens—a People Profile and a Place Profile—resulting in eight Implementation Approaches. See Figure 3 on the previous page for an overview of the framework and Appendix D for a more detailed explanation of this methodology.

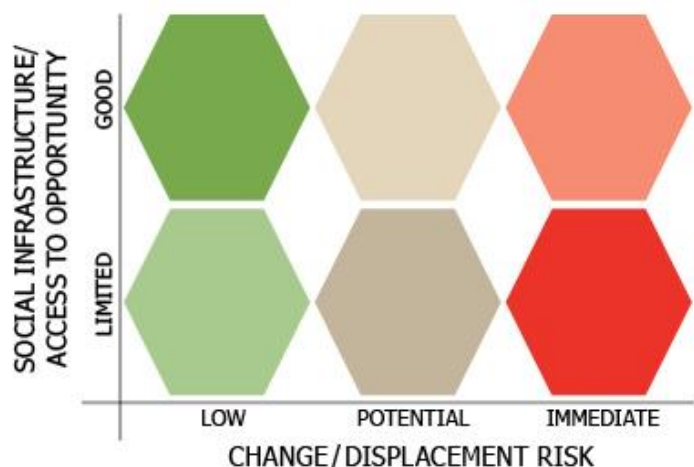
Through its work, the GTC Partnership concluded that it was insufficient to only examine physical aspects of communities; and that only a more holistic study of both “place” and “people” characteristics would fully inform strategies to bring about thriving and equitable transit communities. As a result, the typology uses a two-matrix “People + Place” framework. Each matrix shows the intersection of two types of measures: existing community strengths and likelihood of change. The People Profile assesses residents’ access to social, physical, and economic opportunity, compared to the degree to which the households and businesses are at risk of displacement as neighborhood change occurs over time. The Place Profile examines aspects of a community’s physical form and activity level, compared to the degree to which physical characteristics may change due to real estate market strength.

The results of the People and Place Profiles suggest a framework of eight Implementation Approaches, each associated with key strategies and investments tailored to meet the needs and opportunities in different communities, while also advancing regional and corridor-wide goals.

## Transit Community People Profile

The People Profile includes a *Social Infrastructure / Access to Opportunity* index that measures the degree to which a transit community provides residents with access to the resources they need to succeed and thrive. A *Change / Displacement Risk* classification indicates the likelihood that growth pressures will present a risk of displacement to current residents and businesses. Together, the People Profile informs regional and local implementation by showing where strategies such as targeted community investments, affordable housing preservation and production, and community stabilization and revitalization are most needed.

The *Social Infrastructure / Access to Opportunity* index is based on the regional Opportunity Mapping analysis carried out by Growing Transit Communities and the Kirwan Institute in 2011-2012. The Opportunity Mapping analysis produced a range of scores based on five sub-measures: education, economic health, housing and neighborhood quality, mobility and transportation, and health and environment. For the purposes of the typology, performance on *Social Infrastructure / Access to Opportunity* is either *Limited* or *Good*.



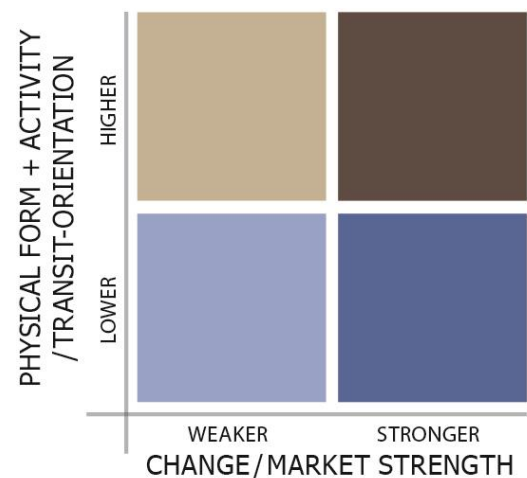
*Change / Displacement Risk* indicates the risk of displacement based on data that show recent neighborhood change, current community risk factors, and market pressure. Data used to quantify these factors included current and recent changes to residents’ income, education, race and ethnicity, household type, housing tenure, and residential market strength. Based on these data, transit communities were classified as *Low Risk*,

*Potential Risk, or Immediate Risk* for displacement. Low risk communities tend to be moderate to higher income communities or communities with lower market pressures. Immediate risk communities show indications that displacement of lower income populations is underway, higher current market strength, or high number of community risk factors. Potential risk communities are those that have weak market strength and therefore do not face imminent displacement risk. However, many also exhibit significant community risk factors that suggest needs for community stabilization efforts to avoid future displacement risk should market forces change.

## Transit Community Place Profile

The Place Profile includes a *Physical Form + Activity / Transit-Oriented* index that measures the degree to which a location's current physical form and activity levels support transit-oriented development. A *Change / Market Strength* measure indicates the likelihood that the community will change due to real estate market demand. Together, the Place Profile informs implementation strategies by showing recommended locations for long-range planning, market catalyst strategies, and policies and investments to support density, walkability, and a high quality public realm.

The *Physical Form + Activity / Transit-Oriented* index measures the degree to which a community's physical form and activity level support a dense and walkable community served by high-capacity transit. The composite index includes data on five sub-measures: pedestrian infrastructure, transit performance, physical form, population, and proximity to a mix of uses. For the purposes of the typology, performance on *Physical Form + Activity / Transit-Oriented* is either *Lower* or *Higher*.



*Change / Market Strength* indicates the strength of the residential TOD demand. The index, which evaluates the potential demand for residential transit-oriented development, includes measures of local real estate market value and activity, employment patterns, density, and household income and size. Performance on *Change / Market Strength* is classified as either *Weaker* or *Stronger*.

## Implementation Approaches

The typology exercise resulted in fourteen People + Place combinations, which were further grouped into eight Implementation Approaches. Each approach connects a set of shared community characteristics and needs to a different toolbox of recommended strategies and actions. Whether and how those strategies apply to any individual transit community will depend on local plans and policies and will be tailored to the opportunities and constraints present in each location. The eight Implementation Approaches are:

- |                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| ① Protect and Grow        | ⑤ Stimulate Demand     |
| ② Expand Housing Choices  | ⑥ Build Urban Places   |
| ③ Improve Access          | ⑦ Enhance Community    |
| ④ Transform and Diversify | ⑧ Preserve and Connect |

The first four Implementation Approaches (*Protect and Grow*, *Expand Housing Choices*, *Improve Access*, and *Transform and Diversity*) include transit communities in areas with emerging or strong real estate demand. These approaches capitalize on the potential for investment in housing, employment, and public amenities in a manner that increases equity and opportunity for both current and future community members. The next three Implementation Approaches (*Stimulate Demand*, *Build Urban Places*, and *Enhance Community*) include communities with medium- to long-term growth potential based on current market demand. Priority strategies focus on market catalysts, long-range planning, and economic and community development. Finally, *Preserve and Connect* transit communities are regional job centers for which residential growth is either limited or not appropriate, but transit access improvements to jobs is paramount.

The Implementation Approaches and typology analysis are intended to complement and inform existing regional and, especially, local plans as they are implemented, evaluated, and refined in the coming years. Linking dozens of transit communities to eight general approaches will help both regional and local decision makers evaluate appropriate policies and investments. Decisions on how best to use this work rest with governing boards of regional agencies, such as PSRC, which administers federal transportation funds, and local councils of cities and counties, which have jurisdiction for land use and zoning. The result should be better informed and more regionally coordinated efforts to nurture thriving and equitable transit communities.

Within each Implementation Approach grouping, there are significant differences among the transit communities. For example, communities in the *Improve Access* approach are similar in being highly desirable opportunity-rich places that lack housing affordable at low and moderate incomes. Recommended tools would increase housing choices and connectivity to other communities. However, the type and scale of tools used should reflect that these are also extremely different places, for example in the East Corridor ranging from Downtown Bellevue, a major regional center of commercial and residential activity, to the Hospital station, dominated by a large medical services complex, to South Bellevue, a single-family neighborhood and sensitive environmental area where no new growth is planned.

Figure 4 on the following page maps the eight Implementation Approaches for the 74 transit communities studied in the Growing Transit Communities work program. It is followed by detailed descriptions of each of the Approaches. Each description includes five elements: a narrative description, a list of the specific transit communities in the Approach, two graphics that show the People and Place Profile results, and a list of key implementation strategies. The key strategies highlight the types of actions that are most important to pursue in the short to medium term to help these transit communities thrive and contribute to local and regional goals. The lists are not exhaustive, and there are other tools and investments that are needed to support any specific community. Furthermore, local plans, opportunities, and constraints will influence the appropriate scale of implementation of each key strategy.

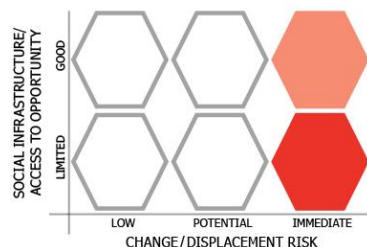




**Figure 4: People + Place Implementation Approaches**

# 1 Protect and Grow

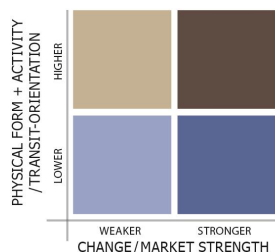
## People Profile



## Description

Protect and Grow transit communities are neighborhoods with emerging to strong real estate demand and community characteristics that indicate an immediate risk of displacement. Physical form and activity levels are varied. Key strategies focus on supporting an emerging market for higher density development while preserving affordability and leveraging community benefits from growth. As communities in transition, they call for a more proactive approach to ensuring equitable growth. Nine communities are categorized as Protect and Grow (including five current light rail stations in Southeast Seattle).

## Place Profile



## Transit Communities

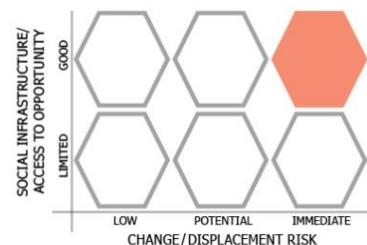
East: Rainier, NE 15<sup>th</sup> St, NE 10<sup>th</sup> St; North: NE 145<sup>th</sup> St; South: Beacon Hill, Mount Baker, Columbia City, Othello, Rainier Beach

## Key Strategies\*

- Development regulations and capital facilities investments that support market demand (7, 9-10)
- Full range of tools for new and preserved affordable housing (11-16)
- Community needs assessment and targeted community investments (19- 24)
- Targeted small business support (21)

# 2 Expand Housing Choices

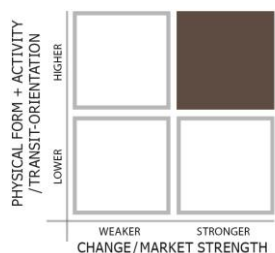
## People Profile



## Description

Expand Housing Choices transit communities are current or future mixed-use centers with good access to opportunity, TOD supportive physical form and activity, and emerging to strong demand for higher density development. Some communities are at high risk of displacement; others have significant subsidized housing but will still have trouble meeting demand from lower to middle income households given the locations' desirability. Key strategies leverage these strong markets to attract growth while providing broad affordability. Seven communities are categorized as Expand Housing Choices, all in the inner portions of the light rail corridors in Seattle (including four current light rail stations).

## Place Profile



## Transit Communities

Central Seattle: Westlake, University St, Pioneer Square, International District; North: Capitol Hill, Brooklyn, Northgate

## Key Strategies\*

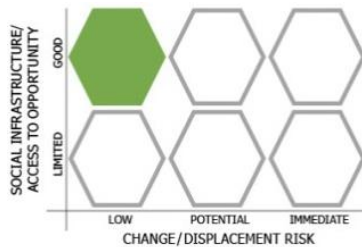
- Support potential to increase market rate housing supply and affordability (7, 9)
- Target subsidy and other efforts to preserve and expand low to moderate income affordable housing stock (12, 13)
- Leverage public and private assets and market demand to meet demand for workforce housing (11, 16-17)

\* Key Strategies refer to numbered strategies found in the Toolkit of Strategies and Actions. The key strategies highlight the most important short to medium term actions to help these transit communities thrive and contribute to local and regional goals. The lists are not exhaustive, and there are other tools and investments that are needed to support any specific community.

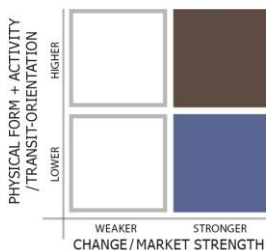


### 3 Improve Access

#### People Profile



#### Place Profile



#### Description

Improve Access transit communities are desirable neighborhoods or centers with good access to economic and educational opportunity, and strong real estate demand. Market rate housing is unaffordable to lower income households and there is relatively little subsidized housing. Key strategies focus on capturing value from strong markets to improve community access, either through subsidy to expand affordability within the community or transit investments to improve access to and from the community. Access needs and redevelopment opportunities will vary in scale and suitability across the diverse communities within this category, dependent on local visions and plans. For example, Bellevue Transit Center has planned for large amounts of near to medium term growth, while South Bellevue envisions little to none. Six communities are categorized as Improve Access (with no current light rail stations).

#### Transit Communities

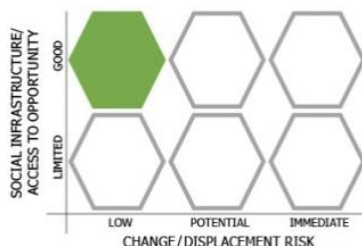
East: South Bellevue, East Main, Bellevue Transit Center, Hospital, Downtown Redmond; North: Roosevelt

#### Key Strategies\*

- Ensure accessibility through multiple modes of transportation (8, 10)
- Adopt tools to increase affordable housing choices, as appropriate to community scale (11, 13-17)
- Connect transit dependent populations to transit and community resources (22)

### 4 Transform and Diversify

#### People Profile



#### Place Profile



#### Description

Transform and Diversify transit communities are neighborhoods or centers poised for transformation due to recent planning efforts that capitalize on their good access to opportunity and strong real estate markets. However, many lack the sufficient physical form and activity levels to fully support future transit-oriented growth. Key strategies should leverage stronger markets to diversify land uses, make public realm improvements and expand affordability. These communities are currently either employment nodes or single-family neighborhoods with little mixing of uses or intensity of development. They also have limited housing choice, either through lack of housing or affordability. At the same time, they have stronger markets and near-term potential to grow as equitable transit communities. Six communities are categorized as Transform and Diversify, all located in the East Corridor (with no current light rail stations).

#### Transit Communities

East: Mercer Island, 120<sup>th</sup> Station, 130<sup>th</sup> Station, Overlake Transit Center, Overlake Village, SE Redmond

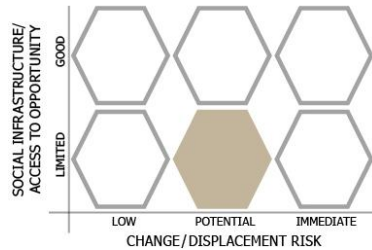
#### Key Strategies\*

- Intensify activity with transformative plans for mixed use infill and redevelopment (6-9)
- Invest in basic infrastructure and public realm to support phased growth (10)
- Full range of tools for new affordable housing production (11, 13-17)
- Targeted small business support (21)

\* Key Strategies refer to numbered strategies found in the Toolkit of Strategies and Actions. The key strategies highlight the most important short to medium term actions to help these transit communities thrive and contribute to local and regional goals. The lists are not exhaustive, and there are other tools and investments that are needed to support any specific community.

## 5 Stimulate Demand

### People Profile



### Place Profile



### Description

Stimulate Demand transit communities are smaller employment centers, located in older city centers primarily at the termini of the light rail corridors. These communities have good physical form and activity, but moderate demand at this time for TOD. Key strategies focus on economic development strategies and investments to expand the local job base, fulfill development potential, and expand access to opportunity. Eight communities are categorized as Stimulate Demand (including five current Tacoma Link stations).

### Transit Communities

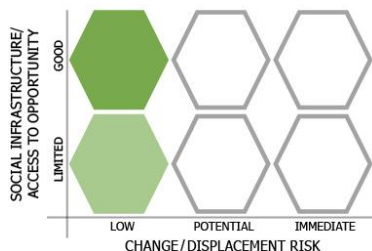
North: Wetmore/Colby, Everett Station; South: Federal Way TC, Tacoma Dome, S 25<sup>th</sup> St, Union Station, Convention Center Tacoma, Theater District

### Key Strategies\*

- Promote economic development to retain and expand job base (21)
- Long-range capital facilities plan with phased infrastructure and public realm investments (6, 10)
- Affordable housing assessment and preservation (11, 12)
- Community needs assessment and targeted investments (19-24)

## 6 Build Urban Places

### People Profile



### Place Profile



### Description

Build Urban Places transit communities are neighborhoods or centers with weak to emerging real estate markets and lower physical form and activity, located primarily along major highways or arterials in the middle sections of the North and South corridors respectively. With low risk of displacement and good existing or future transit access to job centers these communities are poised for medium-term growth, however, their existing physical form and activity levels limit TOD potential. Key strategies focus on market-priming through strategic planning and key infrastructure improvements in order to attract pioneering, market rate TOD. Fourteen communities, found primarily in the North corridor (but no current light rail stations), are categorized as Build Urban Places.

### Transit Communities

North: N 130<sup>th</sup> St, NE 130<sup>th</sup> St, N 155<sup>th</sup> St, NE 155<sup>th</sup> St, NE 185<sup>th</sup> St, Shoreline P&R, Mountlake Terrace, Lynnwood Urban Center, Lynnwood Transit Center, 4<sup>th</sup> Ave SW, Alderwood Mall, Ash Way, 148<sup>th</sup> St SW; South: S 288<sup>th</sup> St, S 348<sup>th</sup> St

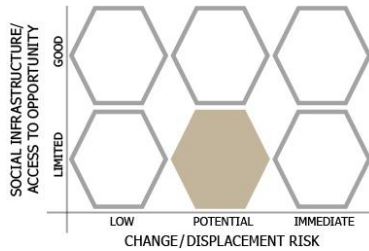
### Key Strategies\*

- Intensify activity with transformative plans for infill and redevelopment (6-9)
- Identify and fund catalytic capital facilities investments (10)
- Full range of tools for new affordable housing production (11, 14-17)
- Community needs assessment and targeted investments (19-24)

\* Key Strategies refer to numbered strategies found in the Toolkit of Strategies and Actions. The key strategies highlight the most important short to medium term actions to help these transit communities thrive and contribute to local and regional goals. The lists are not exhaustive, and there are other tools and investments that are needed to support any specific community.

## 7 Enhance Community

### People Profile



### Place Profile



### Description

Enhance Community transit communities are neighborhoods or smaller centers found in the South and North corridors. Recent and anticipated transit investments have the potential to catalyze considerable community development. However, many will face challenges to implementing TOD given auto-oriented environments, weak market demand, and limited access to opportunity. Key strategies focus in the short term on community development to expand opportunity and social activity, and in the long term on building a physical and social fabric that will attract new investment. Nineteen transit communities, more than any other of the other Implementation Approaches, are categorized as Enhance Community.

### Transit Communities

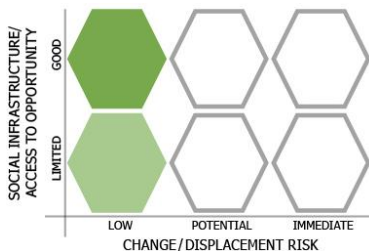
North: Edmonds Community College, International/Cherry, Lincoln Way, Airport Road, 112 St SW, Casino Road, 41<sup>st</sup> St SW, Mariner, Everett Mall; South: Tukwila International Blvd, SeaTac Airport; S 200<sup>th</sup> St, S 216<sup>th</sup> St, Kent-Des Moines, Highline Community College, S 260<sup>th</sup> St, Redondo, Star Lake, Fife

### Key Strategies\*

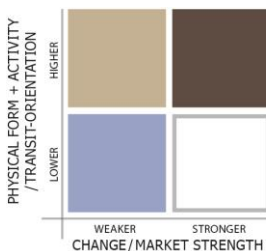
- Station area planning, focus on long-range vision and transitional uses (6, 8)
- Long-range capital facilities plan with phased infrastructure and public realm investments (6, 10)
- Community needs assessment and targeted investments (19-24)
- Affordable housing preservation (11, 12)

## 8 Preserve and Connect

### People Profile



### Place Profile



### Description

Preserve and Connect transit communities are regional industrial or institutional employment centers that play a vital role in the region's economy. While People and Place characteristics vary greatly across the transit communities in this approach, they are similar in the overarching importance of preserving and expanding their employment base. Transit access improvements are needed where appropriate to support commuting. The introduction of housing in these areas may harm job opportunity and is not recommended. Four study areas, including two current stations, are categorized as Preserve and Connect.

### Transit Communities

North: Boeing, UW Stadium; South: Stadium, SODO

### Key Strategies\*

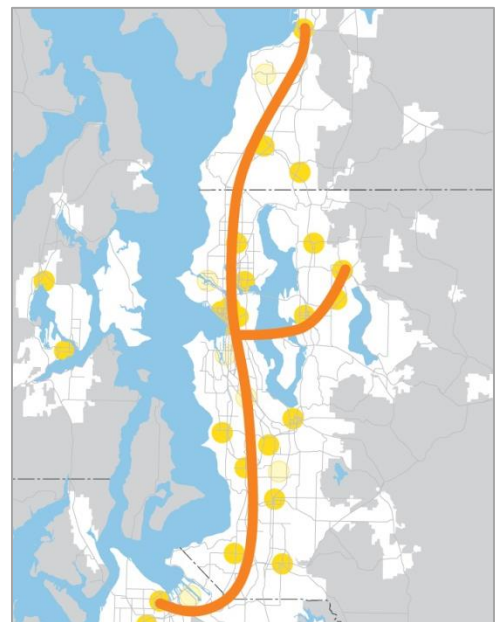
- Ensure accessibility by multiple modes of transportation (8, 10)
- Connect transit dependent populations to transit and other community resources (22)

\* Key Strategies refer to numbered strategies found in the Toolkit of Strategies and Actions. The key strategies highlight the most important short to medium term actions to help these transit communities thrive and contribute to local and regional goals. The lists are not exhaustive, and there are other tools and investments that are needed to support any specific community.





## Corridor Specific Implementation Priorities

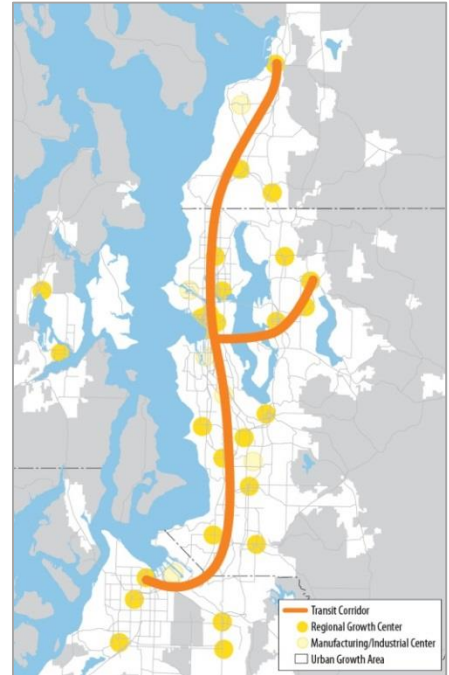




# Corridor Specific Implementation Priorities

Transportation 2040, the region's long-range transportation plan, identifies three future light rail corridors that span three counties and 16 cities, converging in downtown Seattle. Each corridor is unique. Light rail service in each corridor is at different stages of planning, funding, construction, and operations. Some communities along the corridors have well-developed station area plans and implementation tools in place; others will take on such efforts in the future. The corridors also greatly differ in their demographic make-up, real estate market conditions, and the density and mix of uses of the existing land use patterns.

The Growing Transit Communities Partnership examined similarities and differences between and within corridors in a series of Existing Conditions Reports prepared for each of three corridor-based Task Forces. The sections that follow summarize highlights of the Existing Conditions Reports for each of the corridors, followed by key implementation priorities identified in this report and by the corridor Task Forces. These priorities respond to the opportunities and challenges for achieving the three goals of attracting residential and employment growth to transit communities, providing housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes, and increasing access to opportunity.



It is important to note that while this report will make some generalizations about each corridor, they are not uniform in character, but rather made up of a variety of distinct communities linked by existing and planned transit services.

## South Corridor

**Description:** The South Corridor extends 34 miles from downtown Seattle to downtown Tacoma and encompasses two operating light rail lines, Central Link and Tacoma Link. Sound Transit 2 authorized extension of Central Link light rail from SeaTac to Federal Way, with service to Angle Lake expected in 2016, service to Kent-Des Moines expected in 2023, and service to Federal Way pending availability of funding. Two potential light rail extensions include a connection between Federal Way and Tacoma and an extension of the Tacoma Link system to additional communities in Pierce County. In addition, King County Metro operates RapidRide A line, providing a bus rapid transit connection between SeaTac and Federal Way.

The South Corridor passes through the region's most racially and culturally diverse communities. The corridor connects regional employment centers in downtown Seattle, SODO, SeaTac Airport, and downtown Tacoma. Wages and incomes are generally lower than other corridors and the region as a whole. Housing is among the most affordable in the region, especially to low and moderate income households. Between the urbanized downtowns of Seattle and Tacoma, the corridor encompasses more suburban auto-oriented development patterns along two major highways connecting the cities.

A total of 24 existing, planned, and potential station areas along the South corridor were identified for study as part of the Growing Transit Communities work. The study areas are located in King and Pierce counties, and in the cities of Seattle, Tukwila, SeaTac, Des Moines, Kent, Federal Way, Fife, and Tacoma. These transit communities include major employment centers, such as downtown Tacoma, residential neighborhoods, such as Beacon Hill, and major institutions, such as the SeaTac International Airport and higher education campuses. How far along local governments are in planning for transit-oriented communities in the corridor varies considerably, ranging from recently completed neighborhood and subarea plans around several existing stations, to long-range visioning exercises along corridor segments, preliminary light rail alignment studies, and an environmental impact study for South Downtown Tacoma.

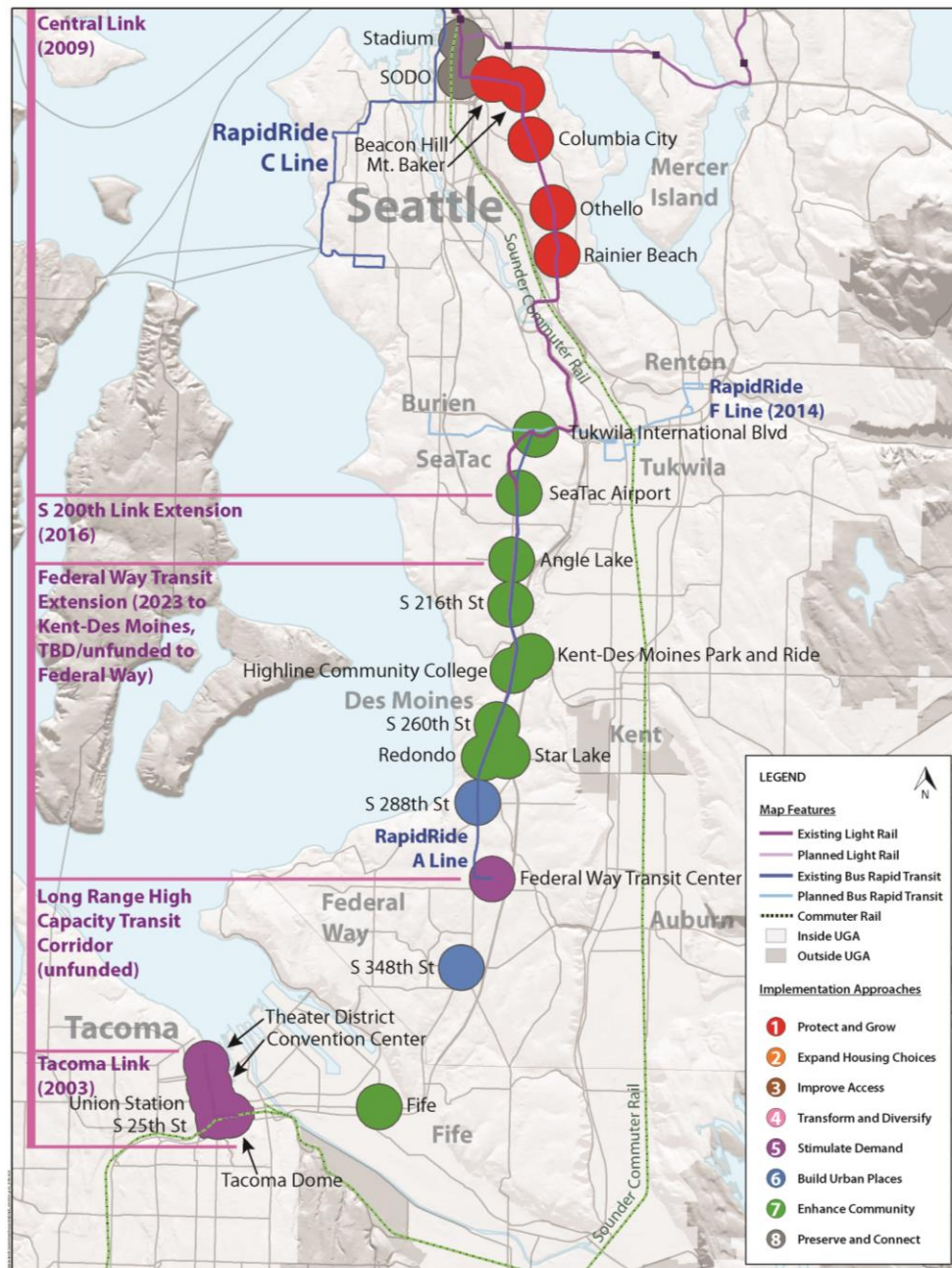
**Implementation Priorities:** Based on the typology analysis (see Figure 1), key implementation approaches associated with the South Corridor include:

- Protect and Grow. There are five Protect and Grow transit communities in Southeast Seattle. As these communities transition to stronger real estate markets, it is important that investments support expected higher density development while preserving affordability and leveraging community benefits from growth. The existing Central Link light rail service is an asset that is likely to catalyze future investment and offers implementation lessons for the corridor and region. Seattle's Community Cornerstone program is addressing several critical community needs, including support to small businesses, affordable housing for families, and community space for the diverse multi-cultural populations in the corridor.
- Enhance Community. There are ten Enhance Community transit communities stretching through the central portions of the South Corridor, from Tukwila to Fife. Although these communities are currently lower density and auto-oriented in character, their increasing demographic diversity and the prospect of future transit investments present longer-term potential to become denser activity nodes. Key implementation strategies focus in the short term on community development to expand access to opportunity and social activity, and in the long term on making the physical and community investments that will attract new growth and development.
- Stimulate Demand. There are six Stimulate Demand transit communities in the South Corridor, including the Federal Way Transit Center and all five transit communities in downtown Tacoma. These communities have a stronger physical form and activity levels, including strong existing transit connectivity, to support TOD development. However, real estate demand is currently weak to moderate in strength. Community and economic development strategies that build on existing assets and new public investments, in order to expand the job base and increase access to opportunity will help achieve development potential. The Tacoma South Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS, along with the planned extension of the Tacoma Link light rail, are examples of ongoing initiatives to support this process.

In developing recommendations for transit communities throughout the region, the South Corridor Task Force identified several specific priorities for implementation in the corridor, to include the following:

- Secure funding and establish a timeline to extend light rail to Federal Way and Tacoma.
- Take proactive regional and local actions to catalyze weaker and transitional markets for TOD. Identify development objectives (uses and densities) that are feasible given existing and anticipated market conditions, existing and ongoing transit investments, and the range of tools available to cities and other agencies.

- Capitalize on the potential for TOD along SR-99, particularly key transit nodes, whether served by BRT or light rail.
- Improve transit connections, particularly better east-west connections, between the light rail corridor and nearby regionally designated centers.
- Ensure effective community engagement with existing and emerging culturally and racially diverse communities along the corridor.
- Identify and promote community assets as a basis for attracting private and public investment.
- Encourage the development and preservation of healthy affordable housing that meets the needs of families.



**Figure 5: South Corridor Implementation Approaches and Transit Investments**

## East Corridor

**Description:** The East Corridor will connect the Eastside's largest population and employment centers with stations in Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue, and Redmond. The corridor includes the Sound Transit 2 funded East Link light rail line scheduled to reach Overlake by 2023, as well as a planned extension to downtown Redmond that has not yet been funded. The 14.5 mile light rail route includes 12 station areas. In addition, two bus rapid transit station areas, along King County Metro's RapidRide B line, were chosen for study as part of the Growing Transit Communities work.

The East Corridor is characterized by regionally high income and education levels, with areas of significant racial and cultural diversity. Major employment centers in downtown Bellevue and Overlake have grown in recent years, with jobs that pay well above the regional average. Housing costs are among the highest in the region. The existing land use pattern includes suburban downtown areas that have experienced significant recent redevelopment, commercial and light industrial districts, and established single-family neighborhoods that are not planned for transit oriented development, such as South Bellevue.

Transit communities in the East Corridor include major employment centers, such as downtown Bellevue and the Microsoft Campus, residential neighborhoods, and major institutions, such as Bellevue College. The corridor is located entirely within King County and passes through the cities of Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue, and Redmond. Extensive planning for transit-oriented communities has occurred in the corridor, including recently completed neighborhood and subarea plans around several planned stations, extensive light rail alignment studies, and a corridor environmental impact statement.

**Implementation Priorities:** Based on the typology analysis (see Figure 2), primary implementation approaches associated with the East Corridor include:

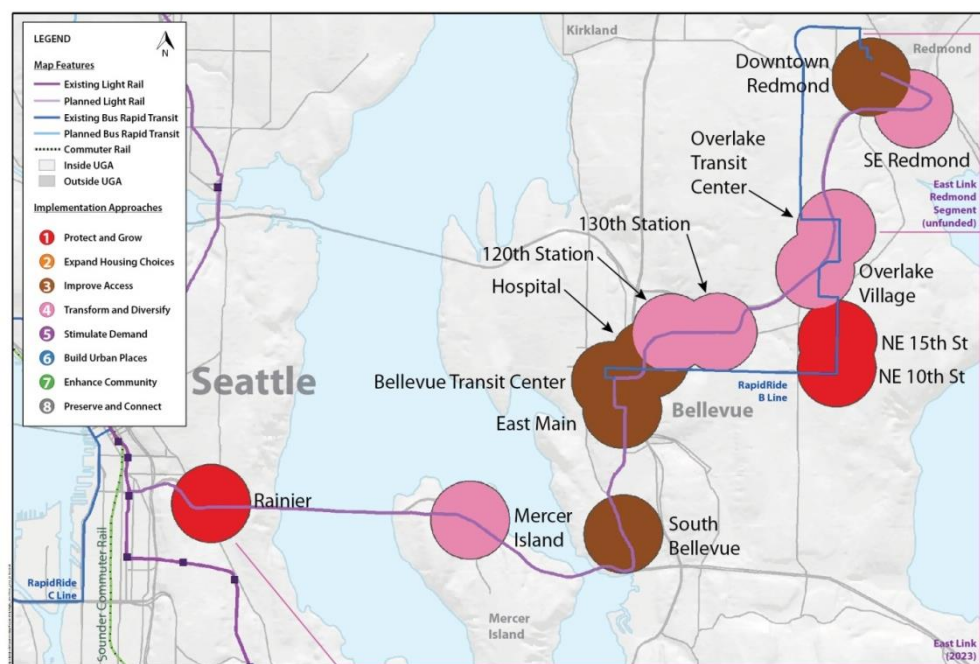
- Transform and Diversify. There are six Transform and Diversify transit communities in the East Corridor, including Mercer Island, SE Redmond, and the four Bel-Red and Overlake station areas. These communities share a strong real estate market and good access to opportunity, with recent planning efforts that call for transformation to more intense mixed-use urban communities with ready access to employment centers. Key implementation strategies include public and private investments to improve the physical infrastructure to support more dense and diverse uses, and strategic production of affordable housing to improve housing and job access to households earning a broader range of incomes. The East Corridor Implementation Support Project will help identify opportunities and develop tools to support local businesses, produce affordable housing, improve transportation connectivity, and create more public-private partnerships.
- Improve Access. There are five Improve Access transit communities in the East Corridor, primarily in downtown Bellevue and surrounding neighborhoods, and downtown Redmond. While these communities vary greatly in the vision for and scale of future development, they share the characteristics of good access to opportunity and strong real estate markets that make them desirable places to live. Creating more housing opportunities available to a broader range of incomes and improving transit connections to other parts of the region will improve the access to housing and jobs in these communities.
- Protect and Grow. There are three Protect and Grow transit communities in the East Corridor, including the Rainier Station in Seattle and two RapidRide B Line stations in the Crossroads area of Bellevue. Like other East Corridor transit communities, these neighborhoods have good access to opportunity



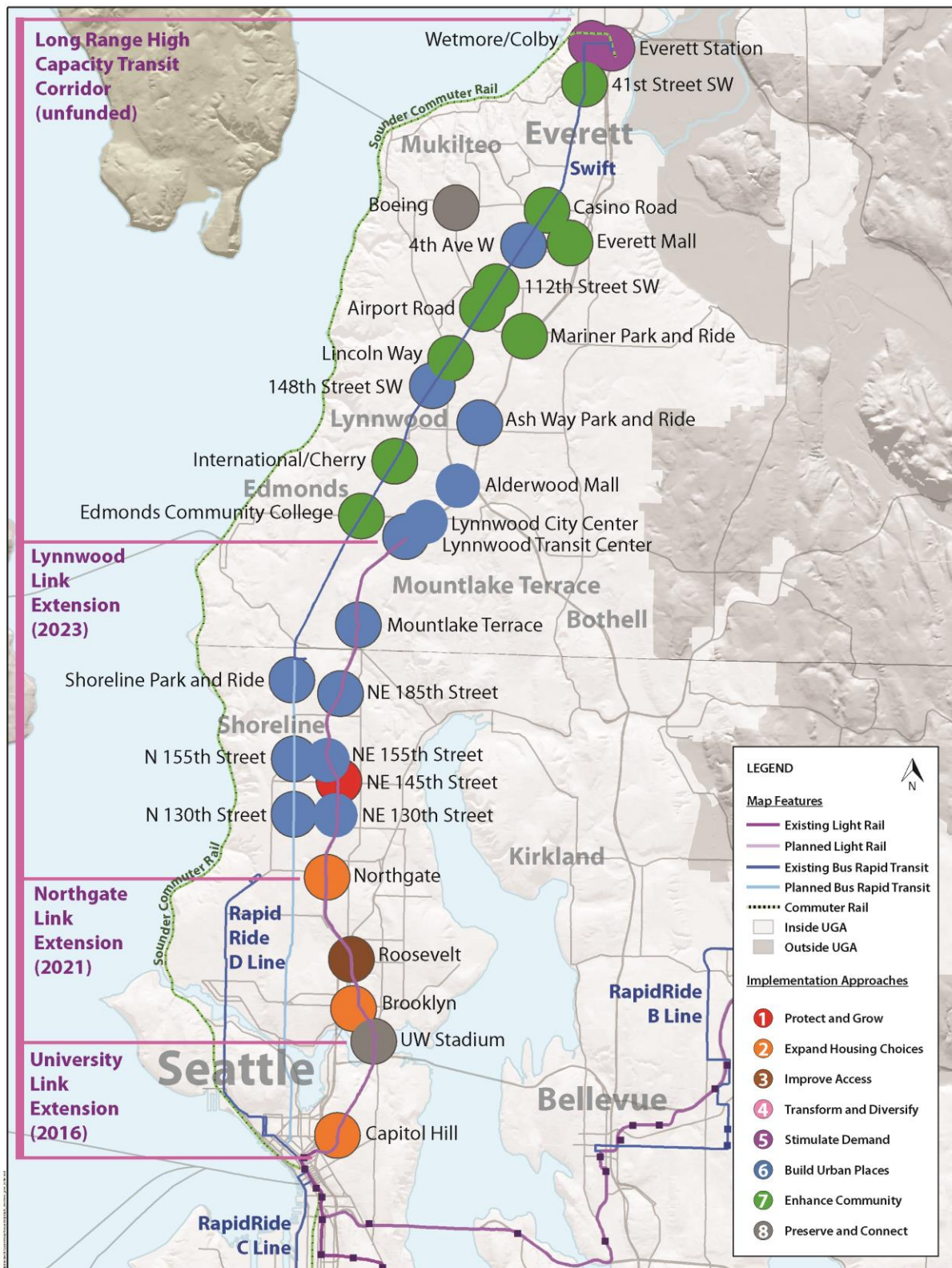
and emerging to strong real estate markets. What sets these communities apart are a higher cultural and income diversity than other parts of the East Corridor. As these communities change and grow over time, key implementation strategies include a proactive approach to preserving and enhancing affordable housing and cultural community resources.

In developing recommendations for transit communities throughout the region, the East Corridor Task Force identified several specific priorities for implementation in the corridor, to include the following:

- Secure funding and establish timeline to extend light rail to downtown Redmond and maintain and increase bus transit service levels
- Focus on creating new urban neighborhoods in selected sites around transit:
  - Make public investments in infrastructure and amenities. In particular, fund and implement projects that have been identified in existing, adopted subarea and master plans
  - Refine zoning and other land use tools
  - Pursue of implementation partnerships
  - Enhance inter- and intra-neighborhood transit service connections
- Work with other east side cities to apply lessons learned to other east side transit nodes, irrespective of mode
- Identify and address gaps in the transit system and barriers to circulation within and to the station areas from other east side jurisdictions and activity areas
- Employ full range of tools to preserve and grow the stock of affordable housing
- Identify and take steps to preserve desired existing activities and services including business retention strategies
- Support leadership development and strengthen participation of community organizations and historically underrepresented populations in transit community planning efforts



**Figure 6: East Corridor Implementation Approaches and Transit Investments**



**Figure 7: North Corridor Implementation Approaches and Transit Investments**

## North Corridor

**Description:** The North Corridor extends over 30 miles from downtown Seattle to downtown Everett, encompassing the University Link light rail currently under construction with service to the University of Washington campus by 2016, the Northgate Link extension scheduled for service in 2021, and the Lynnwood Link extension scheduled for service in 2023. Transportation 2040 identifies an additional future light rail extension between Lynnwood and Everett. Within the corridor, Community Transit operates Swift, providing a bus rapid transit connection between Everett Transit Center and Shoreline along Evergreen Way and SR-99 in Snohomish County. King County Metro will begin service on RapidRide E Line in 2014, providing a bus rapid transit connection between Shoreline and Downtown Seattle along SR-99.

The North Corridor includes communities that vary from dense urban neighborhoods to less intensive areas of residential and commercial development located along two highways connecting Seattle with Everett. Household characteristics are highly variable, with generally moderate income levels and increasing racial and cultural diversity. Housing type, affordability, and overall supply also vary along the corridor, with overall moderate levels of affordability, especially north of Seattle. The corridor is located within King and Snohomish counties, and passes through the cities of Seattle, Shoreline, Mountlake Terrace, Lynnwood, and Everett, along with unincorporated Snohomish County.

A total of five planned and eight potential station areas exist between downtown Seattle and Lynnwood. Between Lynnwood and Everett, 15 major activity nodes—defined by concentrated residential or employment activity, or existing transit service—were also chosen for study as part of the Growing Transit Communities work. The transit communities include major employment centers, such as Paine Field/Boeing, residential neighborhoods, such as Roosevelt, and major institutions, such as the University of Washington and North Seattle Community College. The extent of local planning for transit-oriented communities in the corridor varies considerably, ranging from recently completed neighborhood and subarea plans around several planned stations in Seattle, to long-range visioning exercises along corridor segments, such as Snohomish County's urban centers designations and the extensive Evergreen Way and SR-99 Revitalization Plans..

**Implementation Priorities:** Based on the typology analysis (see Figure 3), primary implementation approaches associated with the North Corridor include:

- Expand Housing Choices. There are three Expand Housing Choices transit communities in north Seattle. These communities have a strong real estate market, strong physical form and activity levels, and good access to opportunity that create a high short-term potential for TOD patterns. The current housing stock provides insufficient affordable choices, particularly to moderate income households who do not qualify for the many subsidized units that are available in these areas. Key implementation strategies to preserve existing affordable housing and produce new moderate income housing will help make these communities more inclusive. Planning for the Northgate station area is one of several efforts to set the stage for equitable TOD in Seattle.
- Build Urban Places. There are 13 Build Urban Places transit communities in the central North Corridor, extending from Shoreline north to southwestern Everett. These communities share a potential for higher real estate demand due to access to jobs and transportation connectivity. However the communities' auto-oriented character along SR-99 and I-5 limits near-term transformation to more

urban nodes. Place-making strategies and infrastructure investments to improve pedestrian scale and connectivity will help catalyze redevelopment in the medium-term.

- Enhance Community. There are nine Enhance Community transit communities, primarily along the SR-99/Evergreen Way corridor in Lynnwood and southwest Everett. With increasing cultural and income diversity and new investments in bus rapid transit, these communities have a long-term potential to become denser and more diverse activity nodes along the currently auto-oriented corridor. Planning strategies, such as the Evergreen Way / Highway 99 Revitalization Plans in Everett, Snohomish County and Lynnwood, will help identify opportunities and remove barriers to redevelopment. Investments to improve east-west transit connections and pedestrian infrastructure, and attention to the cultural needs of the increasingly diverse residential communities, will help achieve long-term development potential.

In developing recommendations for transit communities throughout the region, the North Corridor Task Force identified several specific priorities for implementation in the corridor, to include the following:

- Secure funding and establish a timeline to extend light rail to Everett. Proactively convene local governments, transit agencies, and other stakeholders to begin discussion of potential alignment and station locations for the segment of the corridor between Lynnwood and Everett Station.
- Take proactive regional and local actions to catalyze weaker and transitional markets for TOD. Identify development objectives (uses and densities) that are feasible given existing and anticipated market conditions, existing and ongoing transit investments, and the range of tools available to cities and other agencies.
- Improve local and regional transit access to the major employment centers at the Paine Field/Boeing Everett Manufacturing Industrial Center.
- Capitalize on the potential for TOD along SR-99, particularly key transit nodes, whether served by BRT or light rail.
- Provide lessons learned from the Northgate Urban Design Framework and Master Site Plan to other corridor communities to create models for multi-modal connectivity and best practices for redevelopment near highways and arterials, including I-5 and SR-99.
- Encourage investments, such as best practices in building and street design, to enhance public health outcomes in communities adjacent to highways and other major arterials.
- Improve transit access to key destinations outside of the light rail corridor, to include
  - Community colleges and other post-secondary educational institutions
  - Residential communities and workforce north of Everett Station
  - Community Transit emphasis corridors and BRT investments
- Ensure effective community engagement with existing and emerging culturally and racially diverse communities along the corridor.



## Next Steps



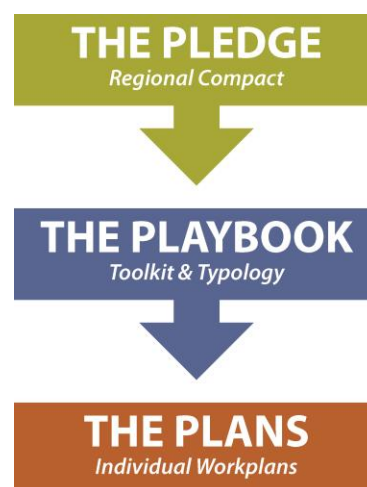




## Next Steps

The Growing Transit Communities Oversight Committee approved a final GTC Strategy on July 12, 2013. As a next step, the GTC Partnership will work toward broad adoption of the Regional Compact. PSRC staff will reach out to councils, boards, and other public and private sector leadership to provide background and context for the Regional Compact as each jurisdiction or organization considers its endorsement. Potential signatories to the Regional Compact include the existing GTC Partnership members, other cities with jurisdiction for current or planned transit communities, and other agencies and organizations with a stake in the implementation of the GTC Strategy.

Endorsement of the Regional Compact expresses support for the work of the GTC Partnership, and specifically support for the GTC Strategy. As a next step, signatories to the Regional Compact will collaborate with PSRC staff to develop Individual Work Plans that identify short- and medium-term actions each jurisdiction or organization will take to implement the relevant recommendations of the GTC Strategy. PSRC itself will be asked to develop a Work Plan that focuses on recommended PSRC actions, including support for an Advisory Committee of Regional Compact signatories. The Work Plans may include initiatives already underway that are consistent with the GTC Strategy, as well as new programs, tools, policies, and investments that advance one or more of the recommended actions. Agencies may also further develop approaches in areas that were only touched on in the Growing Transit Communities process, such as environmentally sustainable development practices or initiatives to create employment opportunities. Target date for documentation of the initial round of Growing Transit Communities Work Plans is early 2014.



The GTC Strategy is the result of the work of a diverse partnership across public, private, and non-profit sectors. Continued and expanded collaboration between these and new partners will be key to its successful implementation. The Strategy is a call to action for this coalition to continue to work together to ensure that the Strategy does not merely sit on the shelf, but moves forward as a living document and platform for the PSRC, transit agencies, local governments, and non-governmental partners to work from as they act to shape the kinds of communities they want to see grow and mature around transit.

By working together, the central Puget Sound region can achieve its goals, as put forward in VISION 2040, for a sustainable future that advances our people, our prosperity, and our planet. The GTC Strategy lays out critical tools and actions to get us there.



## Glossary of Terms





# Glossary of Terms

**Access to Opportunity:** As defined by a series of 20 indicators for urban neighborhoods in the central Puget Sound region in the report [“Equity, Opportunity, And Sustainability in The Central Puget Sound Region”](#) this term refers to the ability for all residents to access high-performing schools, sustainable employment, stable neighborhoods and a safe and healthy environment.

**Affordable Housing:** Housing whose cost is less than thirty percent of a household’s income. Often this term is used specifically to refer to housing that is affordable to households earning less than 80% of area median income (AMI).

**Area Median Income:** Midpoint in the family-income range for a metropolitan statistical area or for the non-metropolitan parts of a state. The figure often is used as a basis to stratify incomes into very low, low, moderate, and upper ranges.

**Built Environment:** Refers to the human-created surroundings that provide the setting for human activity, ranging from large-scale civic districts, commercial and industrial buildings, to neighborhoods and individual homes.

**Bus Rapid Transit (BRT):** Bus service characterized by 15 minute frequencies at least 18 hours daily. BRT service can go beyond typical high frequency bus routes by including capital infrastructure designed to increase bus speed and provide passenger amenities along its route. Examples of supporting infrastructure include signal queue jumps or other transit signal priority treatments, wider stop spacing, curb bulb-outs at stops, enhanced passenger shelters at stops, and enhanced signage, wayfinding, and real-time arrival and departure information.

**Capacity Building:** Investments in training, leadership development, and community organizing that increase the knowledge base and competencies of individuals or groups to participate effectively in public planning and decision-making.

**Complete Streets:** Streets that are designed and operated to ensure safe travel for all users — pedestrians, cyclists, transit-riders, and motorists. Typically, in addition to general purpose traffic lanes, complete streets include sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes and other features and amenities.

**Comprehensive Plan:** A document that guides growth and development for a local jurisdiction.

**Corridor:** In planning, a broad geographical band that follows a general directional flow or connects major sources of trips. It may contain a number of streets and highways, and transit lines and routes.

**Countywide Planning Policy (CPP):** An adopted provision developed collaboratively between the county unit of government and local cities and towns within the county. Countywide planning policies provide a common framework for individual comprehensive plans prepared by each local jurisdiction.

**Equitable Transit Community:** Communities created through inclusive planning and decision-making processes, resulting in development outcomes that accommodate future residential and employment growth, increase opportunity and mobility for existing communities, and enhance public health for socially and economically diverse populations.

**Equity/Equitable:** The Equity Network (see definition below) defines equity as the ability for all people to attain the resources and opportunities that improve their quality of life and enable them to reach their full potential. Addressing the history of inequities in the systems we work in and their on-going impacts in our communities is a shared responsibility. Equity also means that those affected by poverty, communities of color, and historically marginalized communities have leadership and influence in decision-making processes, planning, and policy-making, requiring the leveraging of collective resources to create communities of opportunity.

**Equity Network:** A steering committee, part of the GTC Consortium, composed of regional and local stakeholders and community organizations, with missions that include serving low-to-moderate income communities, communities of color, or other underserved or underrepresented communities residing in the three transit corridors.

**Growth Management Act:** State legislation passed in 1990 to guide planning for growth and development in Washington State. The GMA requires local governments in fast growing and densely populated counties to adopt long-range comprehensive plans that define urban growth areas and address land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, transportation, and other related elements of local and regional planning. The GMA has been regularly amended to further define requirements and to advance coordination among local governments. (RCW 36.70A).

**High-Capacity Transit:** Transportation 2040 describes three main types of transit service: Core, Community Connector, and Specialized. Specific to Transit Communities, core service will be the primary type that serves them. Core service is defined as: light rail, bus rapid transit (BRT), passenger ferries, and high frequency local buses. Core services will effectively create a high-capacity transit system that includes these service modes.

**Light Rail:** An electric powered rail transit system that can operate on a variety of rights-of-way, ranging from mixed traffic on-street to fully grade separated. Generally characterized by narrow station spacing (every ½ to 1 mile), slower average operating speeds, and shorter train units (with less capacity) than heavy rail.

**Local Transit Service:** Service oriented toward access, egress and distribution within a specific regional activity center or localized area.

**Mixed-Use Development:** Projects or districts that include residential, commercial, and business accommodations. Vertical mixed-use development refers to buildings that have multiple uses in a single structure, such as ground floor retail, offices, and residences. Horizontal mixed-use development refers to districts where zoning allows for different uses to be in adjacent buildings and complexes.

**Mobility:** The ability to move about the region from one location to another.

**Monitoring:** An organized process for gathering and assessing information related to achieving established goals and policies. The process uses performance indicators to show progress toward, movement away from, or static state in policy implementation or policy achievement.



**Multicounty Planning Policy:** A policy statement, authorized by RCA 36.70a, adopted jointly by two or more counties, used to provide guidance for regional decision-making, as well as a common framework for countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plans.

**Park-and-Ride:** An access mode to transit and other HOV-modes in which riders accessing the system drive private automobiles or ride bicycles to a transit station, stop, or carpool/vanpool waiting area and park the vehicle in the area provided for that purpose (park-and-ride lots, commuter parking lots, bicycle rack or locker).

**Partnership for Sustainable Communities:** A Federal partnership among HUD, DOT, and EPA to coordinate investments to support sustainable community development.

**Public Realm:** Any publicly owned streets, pathways, right-of-way, parks, publicly accessible open spaces and any public and civic building and facilities. May also include amenities, such as plazas and private open space, which are located on privately owned land but accessible to the general public.

**Regional Economic Strategy:** The functional economic strategy for VISION 2040 and the federally required comprehensive economic development strategy for the four-county central Puget Sound region.

**Regional Growth Center:** As defined by VISION 2040, and located in either Metropolitan Cities or Core Cities, Regional Growth Centers are regionally-designated areas of higher-intensity development and contain a mix of land uses and services. Major regional investments for transportation and other infrastructure are prioritized for these locations.

**Sustainability:** Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and encompassing environmental, economic, and social factors.

**Transit Community:** For the purposes of the Growing Transit Communities Strategy, the community within a half mile radius of, or approximate ten-minute walking distance from, high-capacity transit stations such as light rail, bus rapid transit, streetcar, and other major transit hubs. Adopted regional policy recognizes that accommodating growth in transit communities can lead to a range of substantial social and environmental benefits.

**Transit-Dependent:** Dependent on public transit to meet personal mobility needs (e.g., unable to drive, not a car owner, not licensed to drive).

**Transit-Oriented Development:** The development of housing, commercial space, services, and job opportunities in close proximity to public transportation. Such development is intended to reduce dependency on automobiles, to increase ridership, and to better link residences to jobs and services.

**Transit Station Area:** The area around a high-capacity transit station, typically defined by a one-half mile radius or the area from which the transit station may be reached by foot in ten minutes or less.

**Transit Supportive Density:** A concentration of housing and jobs within a defined area of land sufficient to support the frequent use of a given mode of public transit. The specific density that is considered transit supportive will vary based on the transit mode, location within a transit system, and mix of uses.

**Transportation 2040:** Adopted Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the four-county central Puget Sound region; a functional plan of VISION 2040.

**Typology:** An analysis or classification based on types or categories.

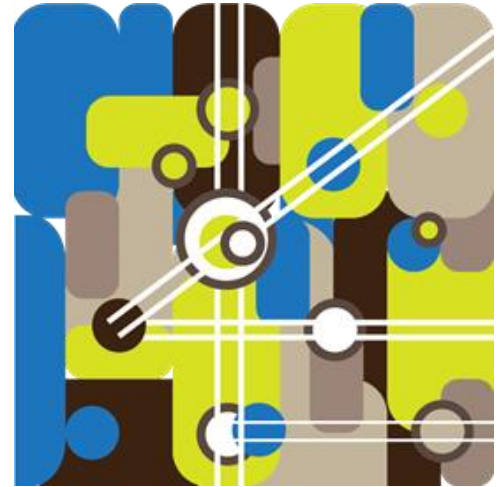
**Urbanized Area:** An area defined by the U.S. Census Bureau according to specific criteria designed to include the entire densely settled area around each large city. An urbanized area must have a minimum population of 50,000 persons at a density of 1,000 persons per square mile.

**Value Capture Financing:** Various strategies that seek to capture the increase on private property values from public investments to help finance further public improvements in an area. Tax increment financing (TIF), special assessment districts, and land value taxation are common value capture financing tools.

**VISION 2040 (Regional Growth Strategy):** *Adopted in 2008*, VISION 2040 is the long-range, integrated, environmental, land use, economic development, and transportation strategy for the four-county central Puget Sound region. VISION 2040 was developed through a public scenario planning and evaluation process over a 3-½ year period. Under the state growth management planning framework, VISION 2040's policies guide the development of regional implementation plans, local comprehensive plans, and their implementing development regulations. VISION 2040 contains a regional vision statement and overarching goals as a sustainable framework for a Regional Growth Strategy and for each of six major categories of multicounty planning policies.

**Walkshed:** The area around a transit center, either measured as one half mile radius, a ten minute walking distance, or a combination of the two. Used to measure the area in which walking or biking can serve as viable means to access a transit facility.

# Appendices



- A: The Growing Transit Communities Regional Compact
- B: Growing Transit Communities Partnership: Program, Process, Participants and Products
- C: Growing Transit Communities Study Areas
- D: People + Place Implementation Typology: Full Methods and Results
- E: Transit Community Profiles



The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) develops policies and coordinates decisions about regional growth, transportation and economic development planning within King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties. PSRC is composed of over 80 county, city, port, transit, tribal and state agencies serving the region. PSRC is home to the region's federally designated Economic Development District, which includes representatives from private business, local governments, tribes, non-profit, labor and trade organizations.

PSRC works with local government, business and citizens to build a common vision for the region's future, expressed through three connected major activities: VISION 2040, the region's growth strategy and multi-county planning policies; Transportation 2040, the region's long-range transportation plan; and Prosperity Partnership, which develops and advances the region's economic strategy.



#### Executive Cabinet:

Bob Drewel, *Executive Director*

Mark Gulbranson, *Deputy Executive Director*

Charlie Howard, *Director of Integrated Planning*

Rick Olson, *Director of Government Relations and Communications*

Diana Lauderbach, *Chief Financial Officer*

For more information, please visit <http://www.psrc.org/>.



The Growing Transit Communities Partnership is an advisory body of diverse public, private, and nonprofit agencies and organizations working together to promote successful transit communities in the central Puget Sound region. The Partnership is funded by a three-year grant from the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities and is housed at the Puget Sound Regional Council.

For more information, please visit <http://www.psrc.org/>.

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